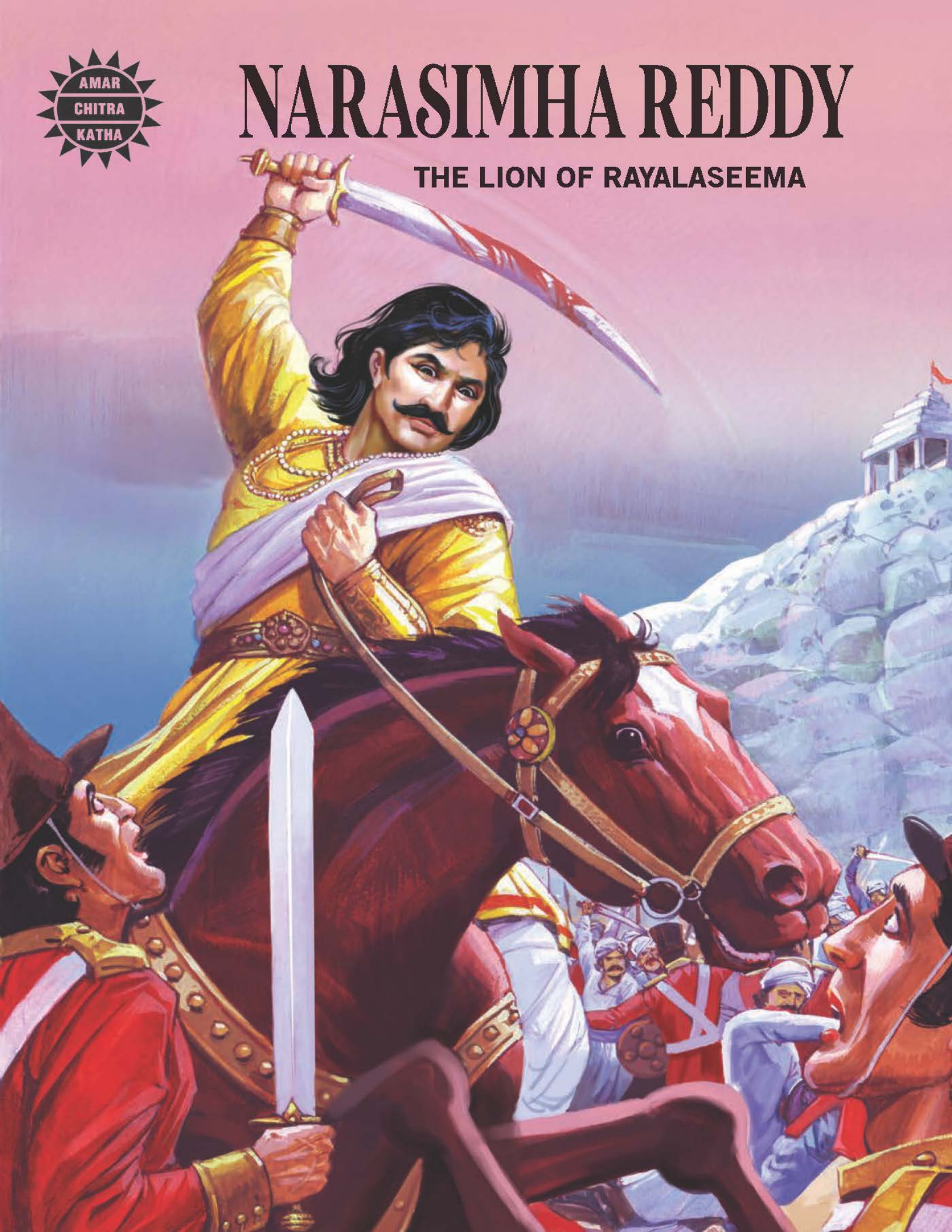
AMAR CHITRA KATHA

NARASIMHA REDDY

THE LION OF RAYALASEEMA



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The events in this story are based on history and on local legend and folklore. The British reported Narasimha Reddy's fight as a minor uprising but the people remember it with great honour and respect.

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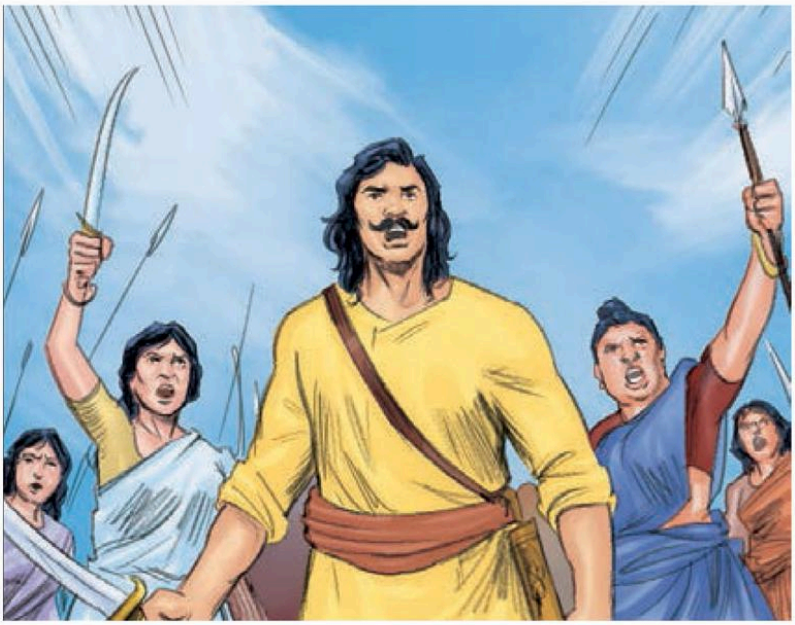
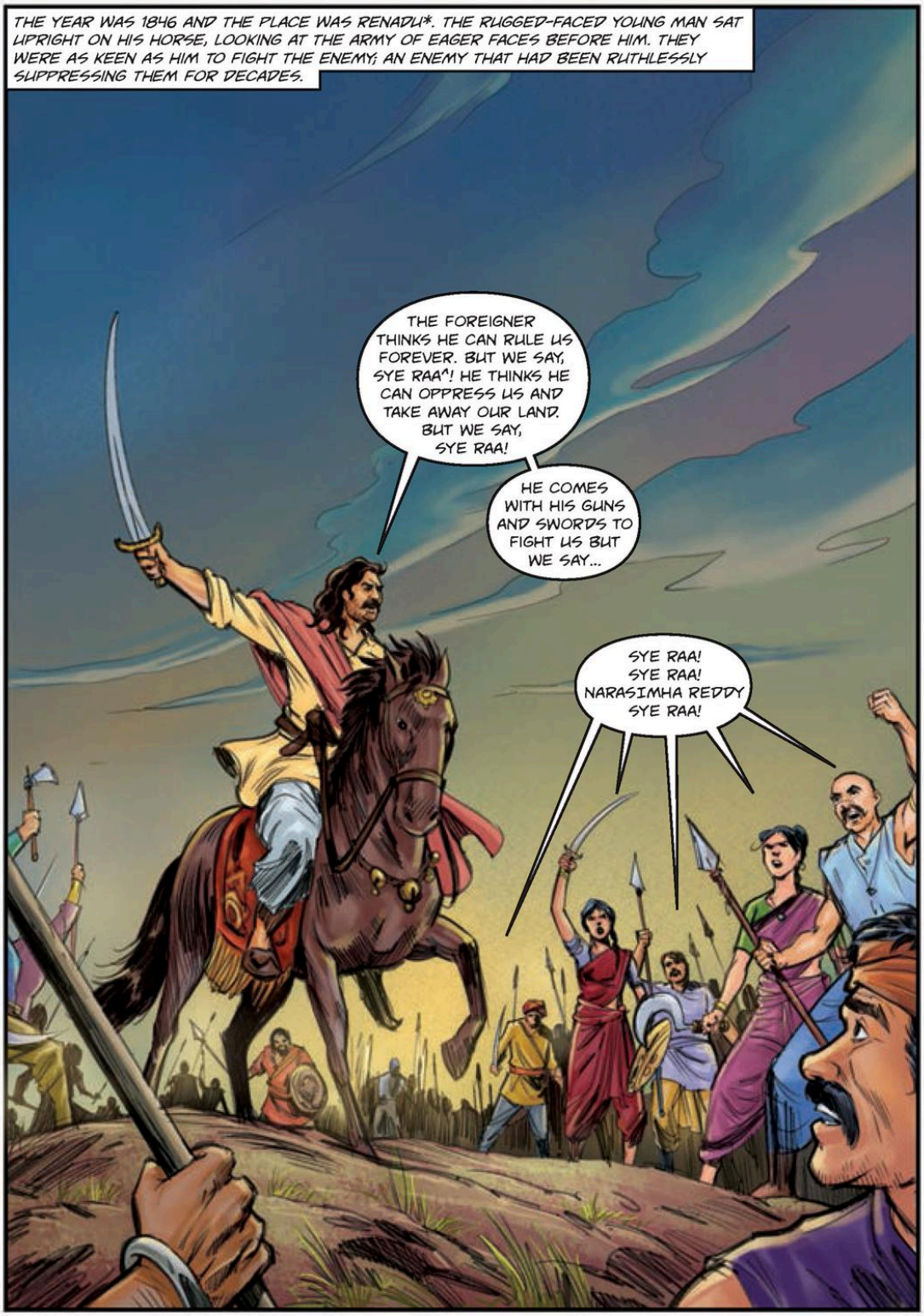
NARASIMHA REDDY

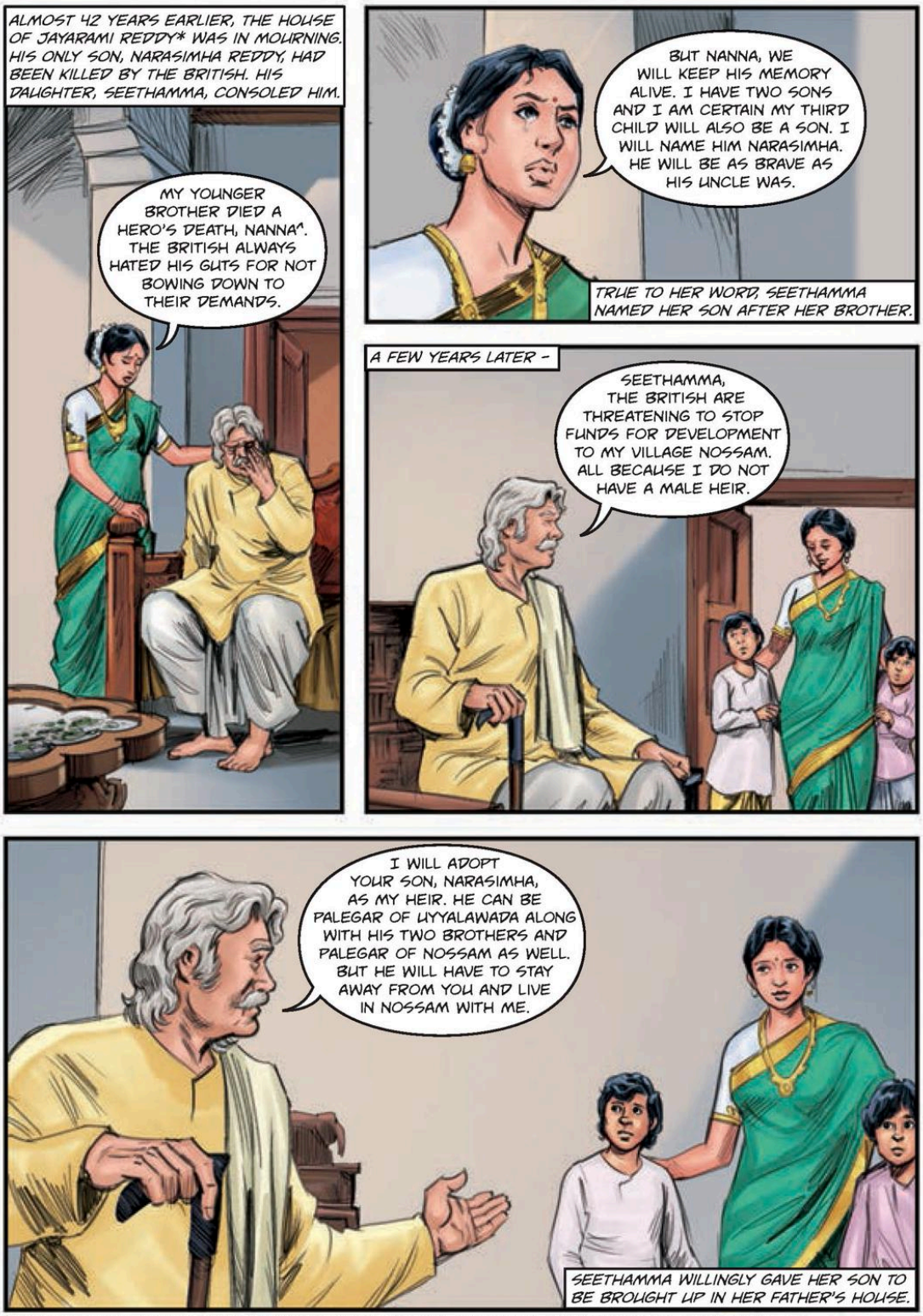
THE LION OF RAYALASEEMA



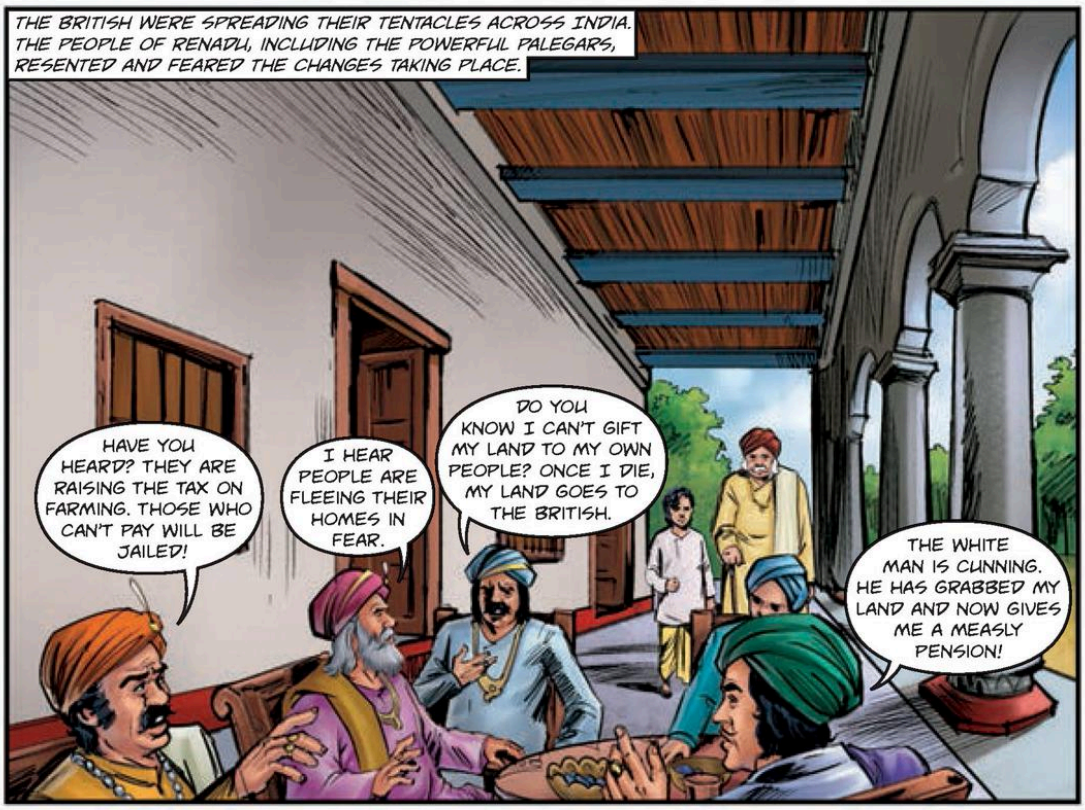

THE YEAR WAS 1846 AND THE PLACE WAS RENADU*. THE RUGGED-FACED YOUNG MAN SAT UPRIGHT ON HIS HORSE, LOOKING AT THE ARMY OF EAGER FACES BEFORE HIM. THEY WERE AS KEEN AS HIM TO FIGHT THE ENEMY; AN ENEMY THAT HAD BEEN RUTHLESSLY SUPPRESSING THEM FOR DECADES.
THE FOREIGNER THINKS HE CAN RULE US FOREVER. BUT WE SAY, SYE RAA^! HE THINKS HE CAN OPPRESS US AND TAKE AWAY OUR LAND. BUT WE SAY, SYE RAA!
HE COMES WITH HIS GUNS AND SWORDS TO FIGHT US BUT WE SAY...
SYE RAA! SYE RAA! NARASIMHA REDDY SYE RAA!

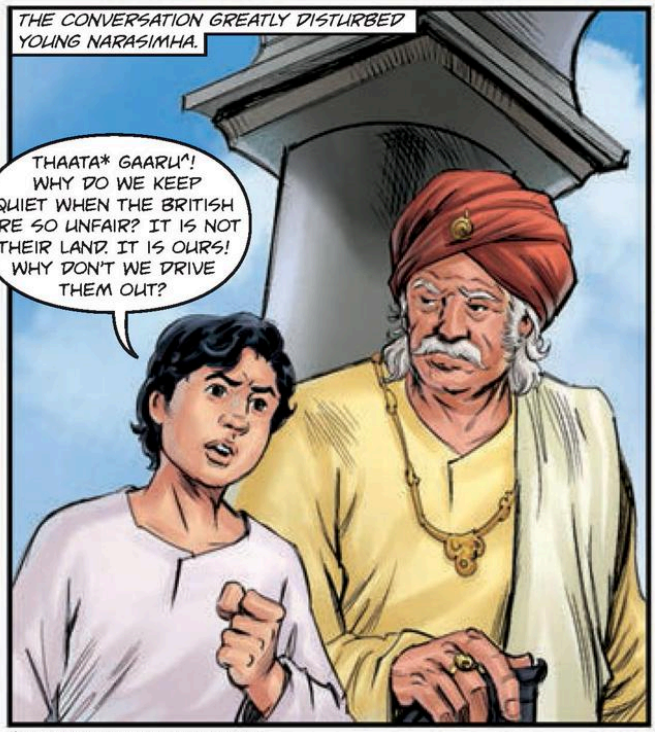
*PRESENT DAY RAYALASEEMA IN ANDHRA PRADESH

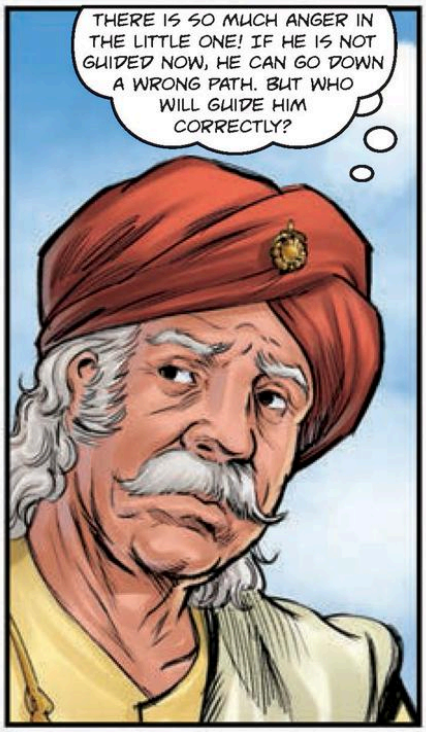
^SYE RAA MEANS 'LET'S SEE' AND ALSO 'ALL HAIL'.


ALMOST 42 YEARS EARLIER, THE HOUSE OF JAYARAMI REDDY* WAS IN MOURNING. HIS ONLY SON, NARASIMHA REDDY, HAD BEEN KILLED BY THE BRITISH. HIS DAUGHTER, SEETHAMMA, CONSOLED HIM.
MY YOUNGER BROTHER DIED A HERO'S DEATH, NANNA^. THE BRITISH ALWAYS HATED HIS GUTS FOR NOT BOWING DOWN TO THEIR DEMANDS.
BUT NANNA, WE WILL KEEP HIS MEMORY ALIVE. I HAVE TWO SONS AND I AM CERTAIN MY THIRD CHILD WILL ALSO BE A SON. I WILL NAME HIM NARASIMHA. HE WILL BE AS BRAVE AS HIS UNCLE WAS.
TRUE TO HER WORD, SEETHAMMA NAMED HER SON AFTER HER BROTHER.
A FEW YEARS LATER –
SEETHAMMA, THE BRITISH ARE THREATENING TO STOP FUNDS FOR DEVELOPMENT TO MY VILLAGE NOSSAM. ALL BECAUSE I DO NOT HAVE A MALE HEIR.
I WILL ADOPT YOUR SON, NARASIMHA, AS MY HEIR. HE CAN BE PALEGAR OF UYYALAWADA ALONG WITH HIS TWO BROTHERS AND PALEGAR OF NOSSAM AS WELL. BUT HE WILL HAVE TO STAY AWAY FROM YOU AND LIVE IN NOSSAM WITH ME.
SEETHAMMA WILLINGLY GAVE HER SON TO BE BROUGHT UP IN HER FATHER'S HOUSE.

*JAYARAMI REDDY WAS THE WEALTHY PALEGAR (LOCAL CHIEFTAIN) OF NOSSAM VILLAGE IN RENADU.
^FATHER IN TELUGU


THE BRITISH WERE SPREADING THEIR TENTACLES ACROSS INDIA. THE PEOPLE OF RENADU, INCLUDING THE POWERFUL PALEGARS, RESENTED AND FEARED THE CHANGES TAKING PLACE.
HAVE YOU HEARD? THEY ARE RAISING THE TAX ON FARMING. THOSE WHO CAN'T PAY WILL BE JAILED!
I HEAR PEOPLE ARE FLEEING THEIR HOMES IN FEAR.
DO YOU KNOW I CAN'T GIFT MY LAND TO MY OWN PEOPLE? ONCE I DIE, MY LAND GOES TO THE BRITISH.
THE WHITE MAN IS CUNNING. HE HAS GRABBED MY LAND AND NOW GIVES ME A MEASLY PENSION!

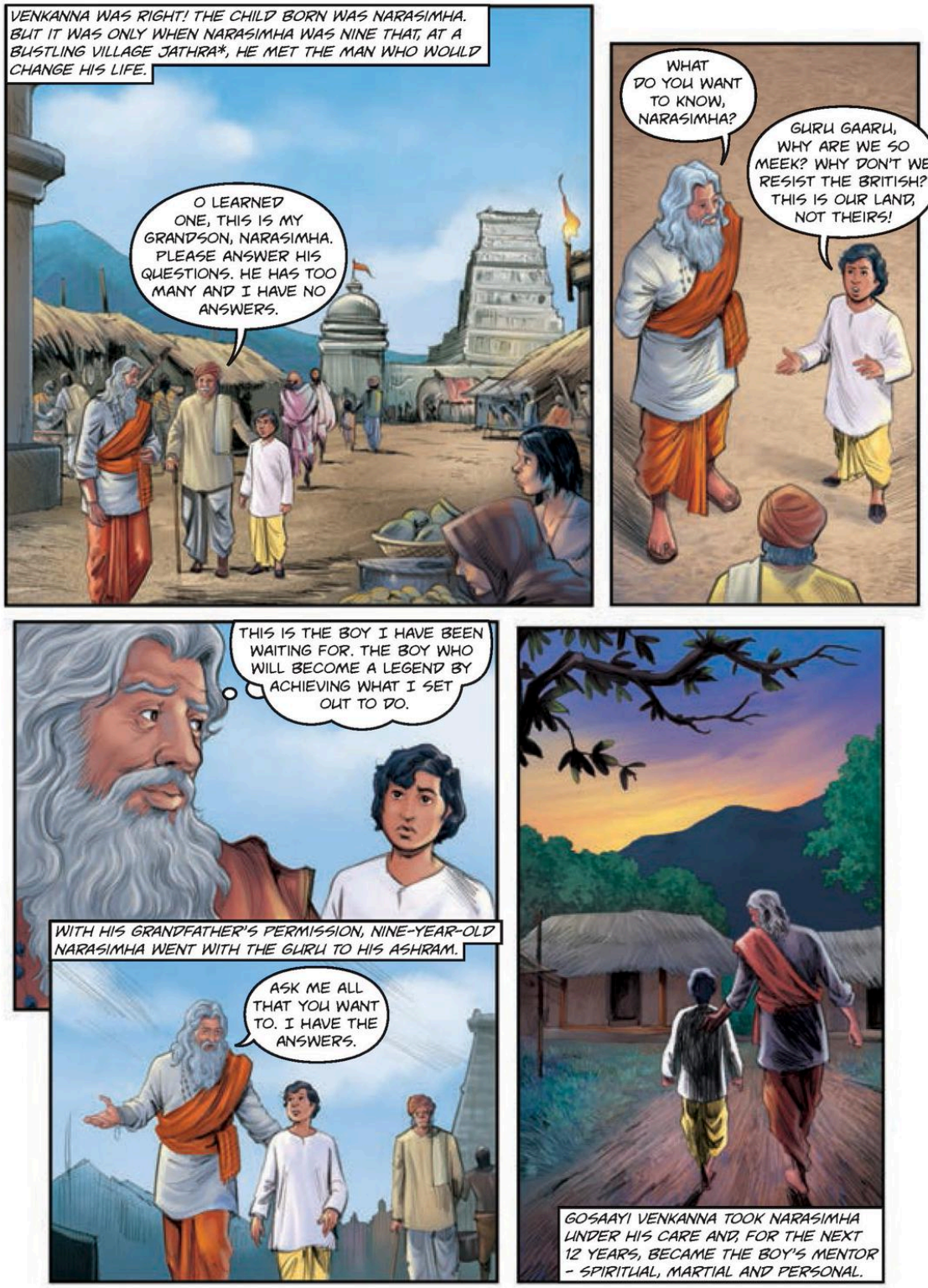

THE CONVERSATION GREATLY DISTURBED YOUNG NARASIMHA.
THAATA* GAARU^! WHY DO WE KEEP QUIET WHEN THE BRITISH ARE SO UNFAIR? IT IS NOT THEIR LAND. IT IS OURS! WHY DON'T WE DRIVE THEM OUT?



*GRANDFATHER IN TELUGU
^A TERM OF RESPECT IN TELUGU

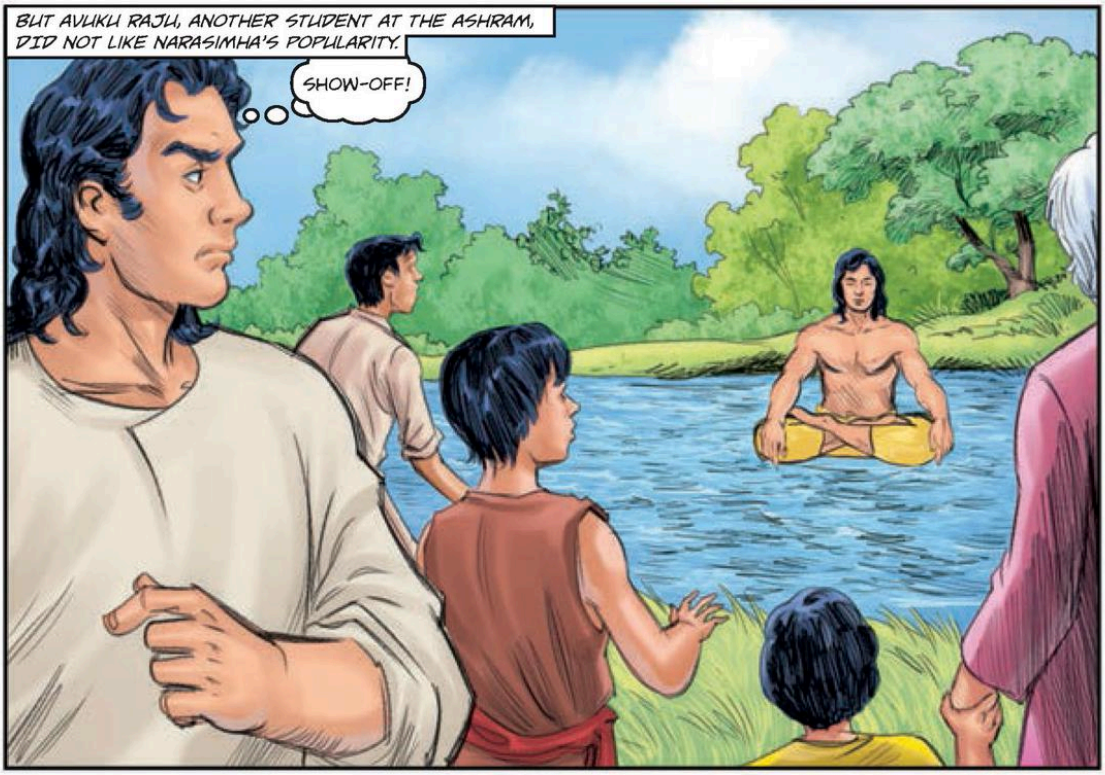
IN AN ASHRAM NOT FAR AWAY, THE SAINTLY GURU, GOSAAYI VENKANNA, WAS ALSO WORRIED FOR THE SAME REASON AS NARASIMHA AND HAD SPENT MANY YEARS THINKING ABOUT IT.
WHEN WILL I FIND THE RIGHT PERSON TO FULFILL MY DREAM OF FREEING OUR PEOPLE FROM THE FOREIGN YOKE?
I MUST MEDITATE AND FIND AN ANSWER.

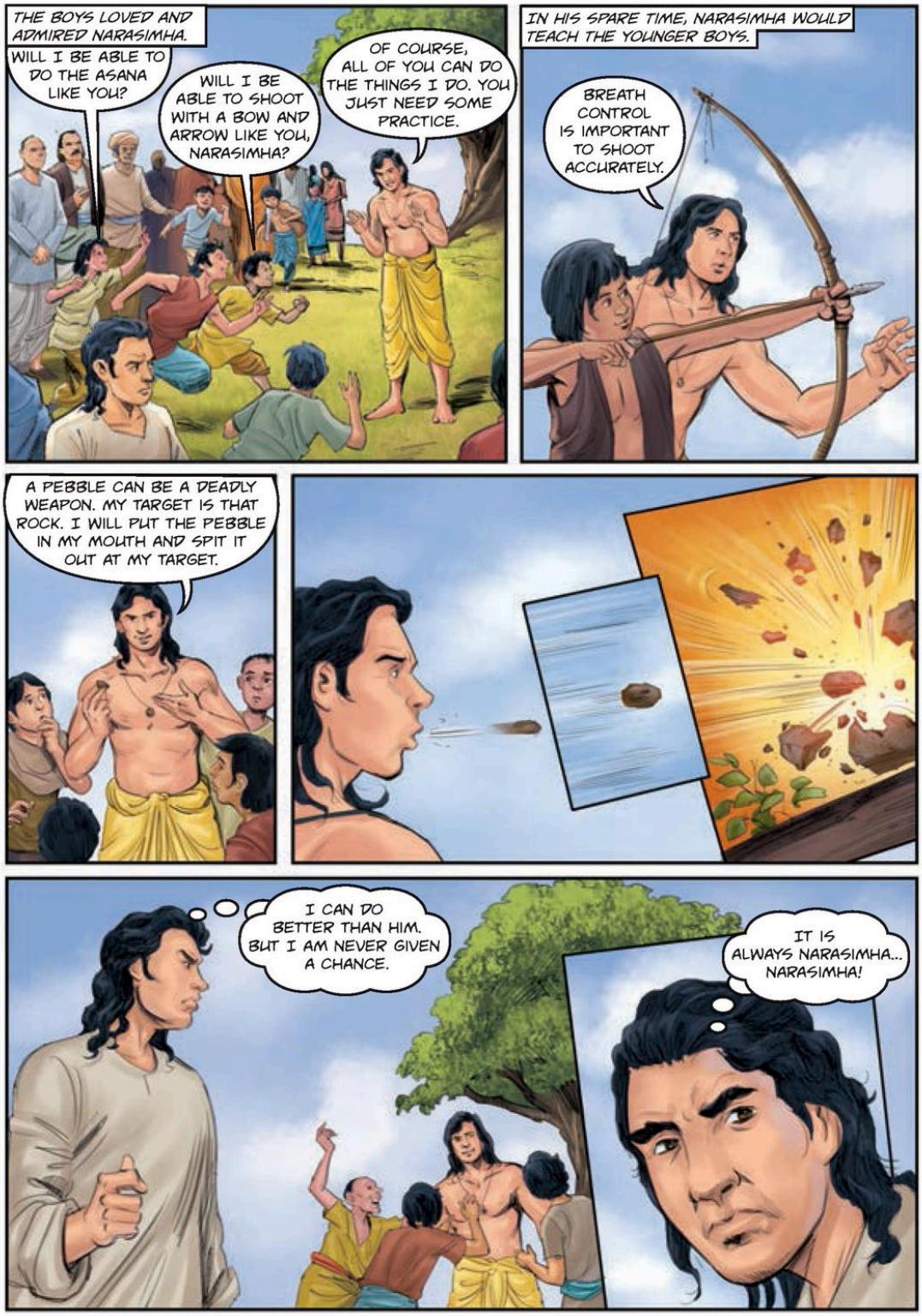
BIRDS AND BUTTERFLIES ALL AROUND ME! SOMETHING MOMENTOUS IS HAPPENING!
THIS IS A SIGN THAT A LEGEND IS BORN. A CHILD WHO WILL HELP ME REALISE MY PURPOSE IN LIFE.

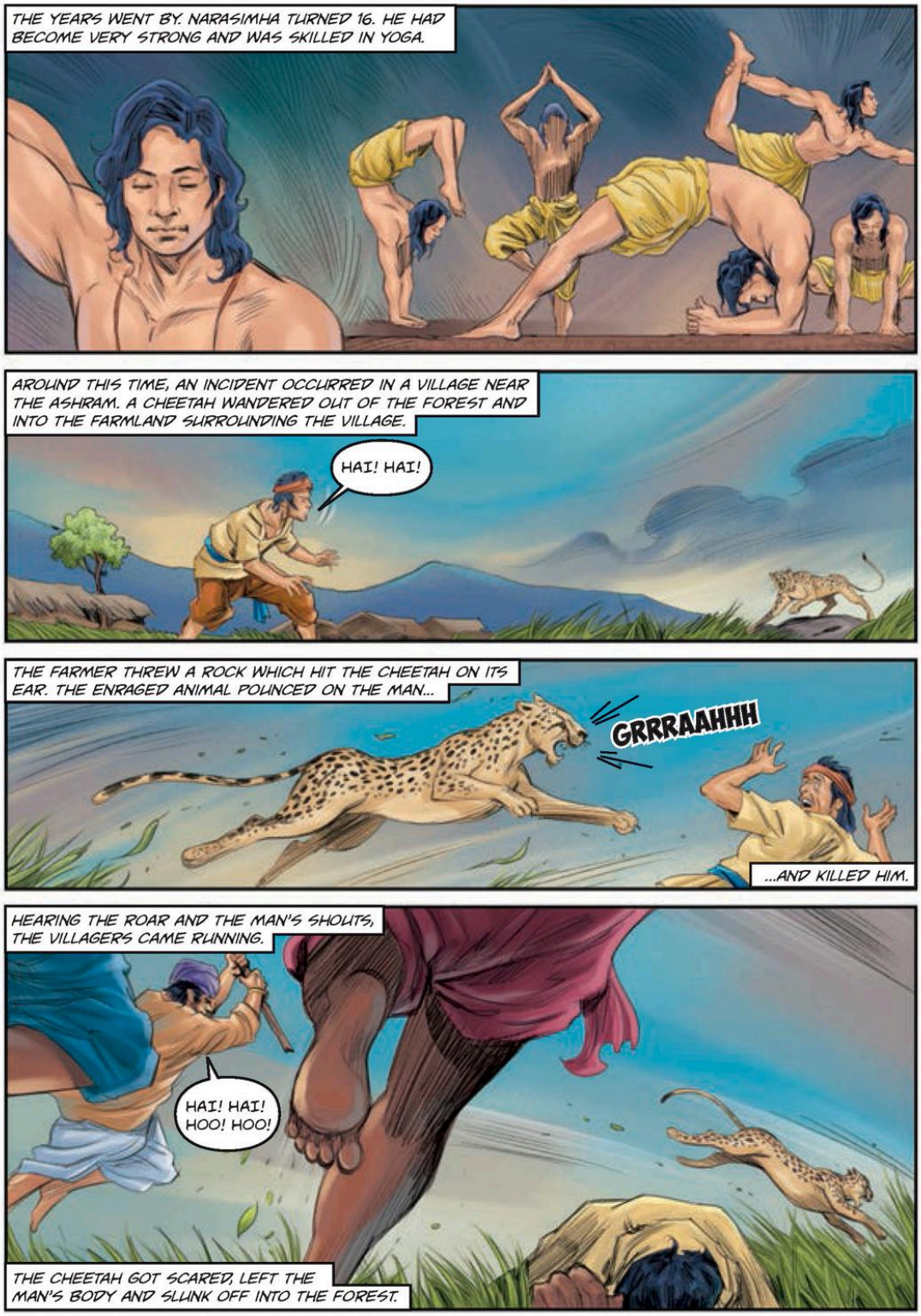

VENKANNA WAS RIGHT! THE CHILD BORN WAS NARASIMHA. BUT IT WAS ONLY WHEN NARASIMHA WAS NINE THAT, AT A BUSTLING VILLAGE JATHRA*, HE MET THE MAN WHO WOULD CHANGE HIS LIFE.
O LEARNED ONE, THIS IS MY GRANDSON, NARASIMHA. PLEASE ANSWER HIS QUESTIONS. HE HAS TOO MANY AND I HAVE NO ANSWERS.
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW, NARASIMHA?
GURU GAARU, WHY ARE WE SO MEEK? WHY DON'T WE RESIST THE BRITISH? THIS IS OUR LAND, NOT THEIRS!
THIS IS THE BOY I HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR. THE BOY WHO WILL BECOME A LEGEND BY ACHIEVING WHAT I SET OUT TO DO.
WITH HIS GRANDFATHER'S PERMISSION, NINE-YEAR-OLD NARASIMHA WENT WITH THE GURU TO HIS ASHRAM.
ASK ME ALL THAT YOU WANT TO. I HAVE THE ANSWERS.
GOSAAYI VENKANNA TOOK NARASIMHA UNDER HIS CARE AND, FOR THE NEXT 12 YEARS, BECAME THE BOY'S MENTOR – SPIRITUAL, MARTIAL AND PERSONAL.

*RELIGIOUS FESTIVAL

NARASIMHA WAS A QUICK LEARNER. ONCE –
LOOK AT NARASIMHA! HE IS AMAZING!
GURU GAARU HAS TAUGHT HIM WELL.
NARASIMHA WAS PERFORMING JALASTHAMBANAM, WHICH IS THE ABILITY TO BE SEATED ON WATER IN PADMASANA OR THE LOTUS POSITION OF YOGA.


BUT AVUKU RAJU, ANOTHER STUDENT AT THE ASHRAM, DID NOT LIKE NARASIMHA'S POPULARITY.
SHOW-OFF!

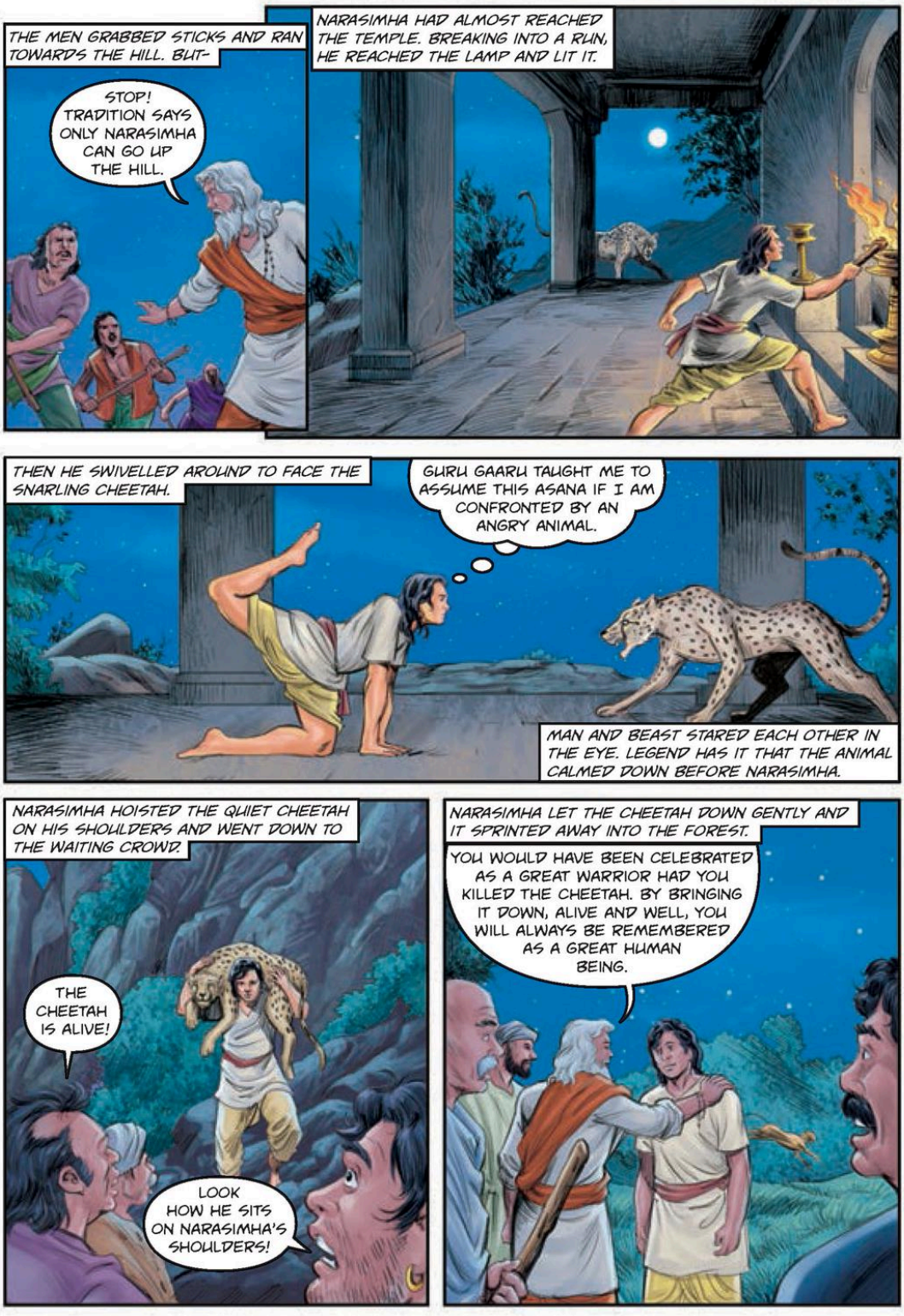

THE BOYS LOVED AND ADMIRED NARASIMHA.
WILL I BE ABLE TO DO THE ASANA LIKE YOU?
WILL I BE ABLE TO SHOOT WITH A BOW AND ARROW LIKE YOU, NARASIMHA?
OF COURSE, ALL OF YOU CAN DO THE THINGS I DO. YOU JUST NEED SOME PRACTICE.
IN HIS SPARE TIME, NARASIMHA WOULD TEACH THE YOUNGER BOYS.
BREATH CONTROL IS IMPORTANT TO SHOOT ACCURATELY.
A PEBBLE CAN BE A DEADLY WEAPON. MY TARGET IS THAT ROCK. I WILL PUT THE PEBBLE IN MY MOUTH AND SPIT IT OUT AT MY TARGET.
I CAN DO BETTER THAN HIM. BUT I AM NEVER GIVEN A CHANCE.
IT IS ALWAYS NARASIMHA... NARASIMHA!


THE YEARS WENT BY. NARASIMHA TURNED 16. HE HAD BECOME VERY STRONG AND WAS SKILLED IN YOGA.
AROUND THIS TIME, AN INCIDENT OCCURRED IN A VILLAGE NEAR THE ASHRAM. A CHEETAH WANDERED OUT OF THE FOREST AND INTO THE FARMLAND SURROUNDING THE VILLAGE.
HAI! HAI!
THE FARMER THREW A ROCK WHICH HIT THE CHEETAH ON ITS EAR. THE ENRAGED ANIMAL POUNCED ON THE MAN...
GRRRAAHHH
...AND KILLED HIM.
HEARING THE ROAR AND THE MAN'S SHOUTS, THE VILLAGERS CAME RUNNING.
HAI! HAI! HOO! HOO!
THE CHEETAH GOT SCARED, LEFT THE MAN'S BODY AND SLUNK OFF INTO THE FOREST.

THE CHEETAH MUST HAVE ATTACKED IN SELF DEFENCE. IT WON'T COME BACK NOW.
IT WILL COME BACK. IT HAS TASTED BLOOD.
THE OLD MAN WAS RIGHT. REPORTS SOON CAME IN OF MORE KILLINGS BY THE CHEETAH.
THE NEWS WAS BROUGHT TO THE ASHRAM BY THE FATHER OF AVUKU RAJU.
NANNA, IF I CAPTURE THE CHEETAH I WILL WIN EVERYONE'S TRUST. LET ME GO!
NOTHING DOING! YOU ARE STRONG BUT YOU DON'T HAVE THE SKILLS TO BRING DOWN A CHEETAH.
SOON, THE NEWS REACHED GOSAAYI VENKANNA.
IF THERE IS ONE PERSON WHO CAN TAKE ON THE CHEETAH, IT IS NARASIMHA.
NARASIMHA'S CHEST SWELLED WITH PRIDE.
MY GURU TRUSTS ME!
BUT NARASIMHA'S GRANDFATHER AND MOTHER WERE NOT HAPPY AT ALL.
GURU GAARU! YOU CANNOT ASK NARASIMHA TO DO THIS. FORGIVE ME BUT I..I..DON'T THINK HE SHOULD GO.
IT IS DANGEROUS TO LET A 16-YEAR-OLD BOY CONFRONT A MAN-EATER.
I CANNOT DO WHAT MY GURU ASKS OF ME BECAUSE OF THE FEARS OF MY FAMILY.
NARASIMHA KNEW IT WOULD BE RUDE TO SPEAK AGAINST HIS ELDERS, SO HE REMAINED QUIET.
MUCH TO THE RELIEF OF HIS FAMILY, THERE WERE NO SIGHTINGS OF THE CHEETAH FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS.
IT HAS GONE BACK TO THE FOREST. THAT'S FOR SURE.

PUTTING THE CHEETAH INCIDENT BEHIND THEM, THE LOCAL PEOPLE STARTED PREPARATIONS TO CELEBRATE THE AUSPICIOUS MONTH OF KARTIKA. ON THE NIGHT OF KARTIKA POORNIMA*-
IT IS TIME FOR NARASIMHA TO CLIMB THE JAGANNATHA KONDA AND LIGHT THE LAMP IN THE SHRINE.
IT WAS A TRADITION IN NARASIMHA REDDY'S FAMILY THAT A MALE MEMBER LIGHT THE LAMP ON TOP OF THE HILL ON KARTIKA POORNIMA NIGHT. NARASIMHA HAD CLIMBED THE HILL, SINCE HE WAS A CHILD, AND LIT THE LAMP. THE LIGHT WAS VISIBLE TO THE 50 TO 60 VILLAGES SURROUNDING THE HILL. THE PEOPLE REGARDED IT AS A SYMBOL OF HOPE AND LOOKED FORWARD TO THE ANNUAL RITUAL.
NARASIMHA TOOK THE LIGHTED TORCH AND STARTED THE CLIMB.
SUDDENLY, THE MOON WENT BEHIND A CLOUD AND DARKNESS ENVELOPED THE AREA. FROM THE HILLTOP CAME A TERRIFYING SOUND.
GRRUNNT
THE CHEETAH WAS HIDING ON THE HILL!

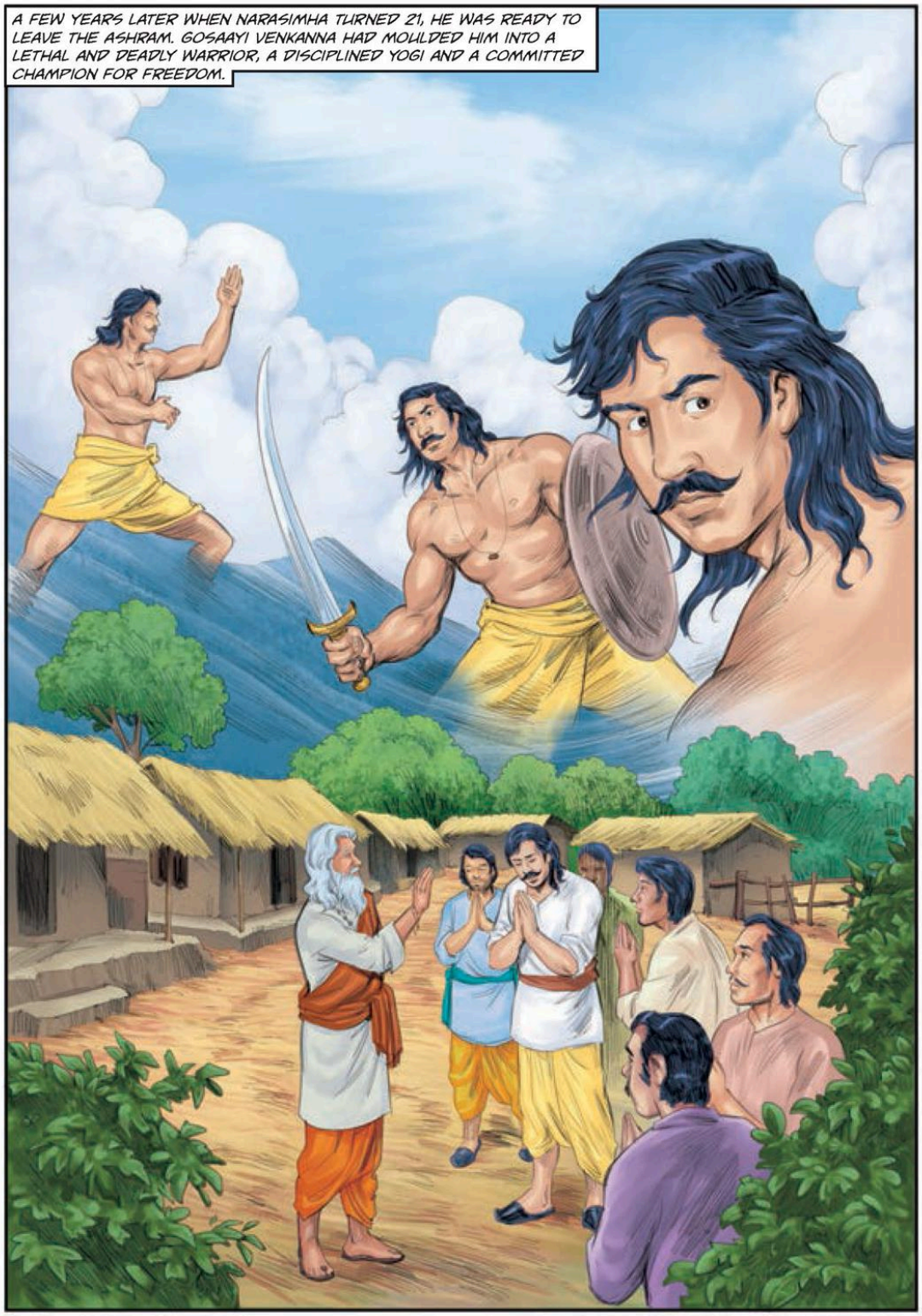
*NIGHT OF THE FULL MOON IN THE MONTH OF KARTIKA, THE DAY SHIVA DESTROYED THE DEMON TARAKASURA.


THE MEN GRABBED STICKS AND RAN TOWARDS THE HILL. BUT-
STOP! TRADITION SAYS ONLY NARASIMHA CAN GO UP THE HILL.
NARASIMHA HAD ALMOST REACHED THE TEMPLE. BREAKING INTO A RUN, HE REACHED THE LAMP AND LIT IT.
THEN HE SWIVELLED AROUND TO FACE THE SNARLING CHEETAH.
GURU GAARU TAUGHT ME TO ASSUME THIS ASANA IF I AM CONFRONTED BY AN ANGRY ANIMAL.
MAN AND BEAST STARED EACH OTHER IN THE EYE. LEGEND HAS IT THAT THE ANIMAL CALMED DOWN BEFORE NARASIMHA.
NARASIMHA HOISTED THE QUIET CHEETAH ON HIS SHOULDERS AND WENT DOWN TO THE WAITING CROWD.
THE CHEETAH IS ALIVE!
LOOK HOW HE SITS ON NARASIMHA'S SHOULDERS!
NARASIMHA LET THE CHEETAH DOWN GENTLY AND IT SPRINTED AWAY INTO THE FOREST.
YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN CELEBRATED AS A GREAT WARRIOR HAD YOU KILLED THE CHEETAH. BY BRINGING IT DOWN, ALIVE AND WELL, YOU WILL ALWAYS BE REMEMBERED AS A GREAT HUMAN BEING.

A YEAR LATER, IT WAS A SCORCHING SUMMER IN RENADU. GURU VENKANNA SUMMONED SEVEN STUDENTS, INCLUDING NARASIMHA.
TONIGHT YOU ALL WILL CONDUCT A SARASWATI PUJA*. FOR THE PUJA YOU WILL NEED TO FIND A FULLY-BLOOMED LOTUS FLOWER BEFORE DUSK.
THEN, GOSAAYI VENKANNA LEFT THE ROOM.
IN THIS SUMMER HEAT, WHEN ALL THE LAKES HAVE DRIED UP, WHERE WILL WE FIND A LOTUS?
LET'S TELL GURU GAARU WE CAN'T DO THIS TASK.
LET'S AT LEAST TRY.
I AM GOING TO TAKE THE DEVGANERU FLOWER. IT IS ALSO ONE OF SARASWATI'S FAVOURITE FLOWERS.
IF GURU GAARU HAS SAID A LOTUS IS NEEDED FOR THE PUJA, THEN THERE HAS TO BE ONE AROUND SOMEWHERE.
NARASIMHA SET OFF ON HIS SEARCH. AFTER A LONG TIME, HE CAME UPON A STREAM FULL OF WATER.
DO YOU KNOW WHERE THIS STREAM IS COMING FROM?
FROM THE KUMUDAMATH RIVER IN THE KOILKUNTLA FOREST. THE RIVER NEVER RUNS DRY EVEN IN THE HOTTEST SUMMER.
NARASIMHA BROKE INTO A RUN.
STOP! IT WILL BE DARK BY THE TIME YOU REACH THERE. YOU WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO FIND YOUR WAY BACK.
WHAT COULD HE WANT AT THIS TIME OF THE DAY?

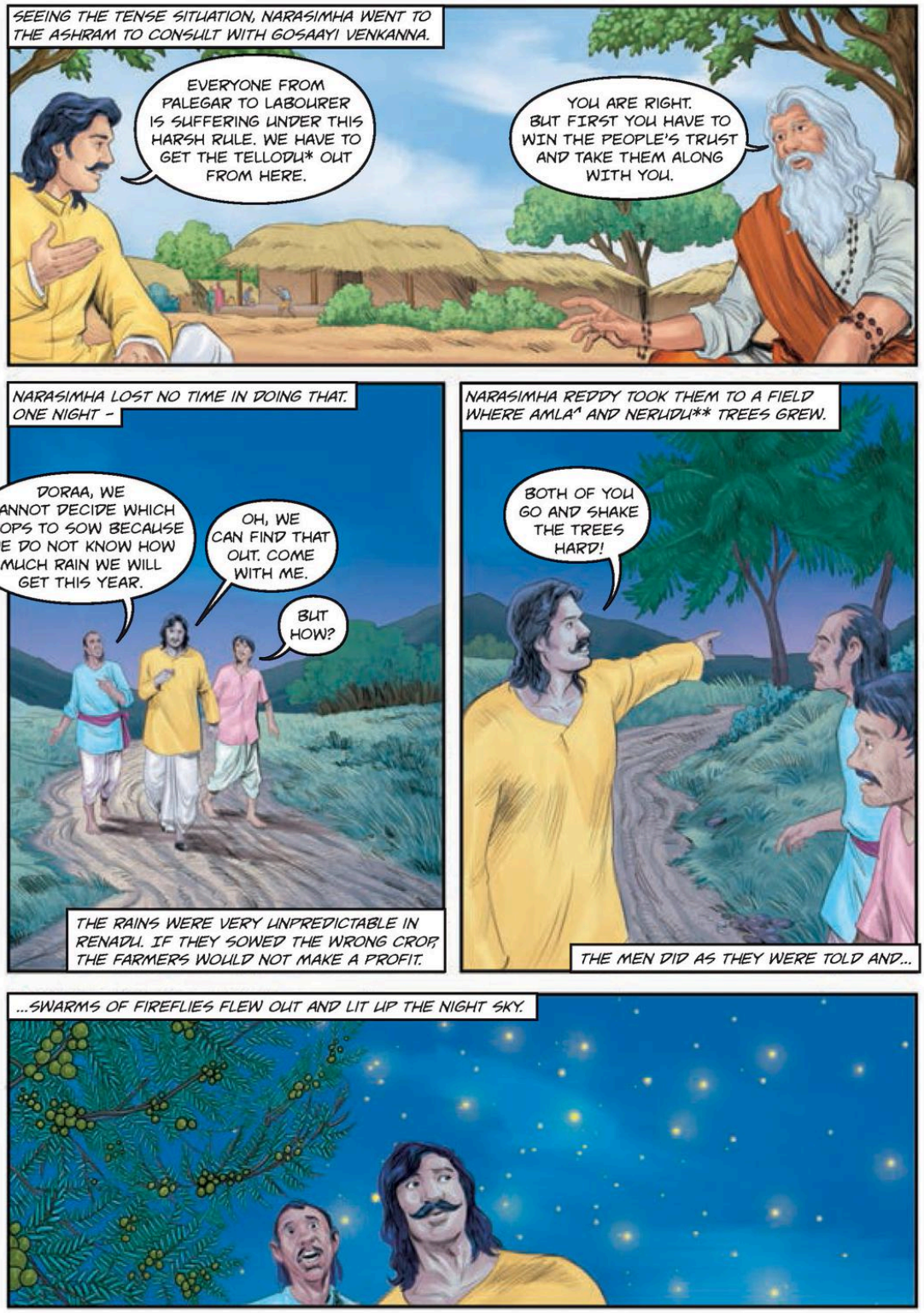
* A CEREMONIAL WORSHIP OF THE GODDESS OF LEARNING

WHEN HE REACHED THE SOURCE OF THE STREAM –
LOTUSES! SO MANY OF THEM!
IT WAS DARK BY THE TIME NARASIMHA PLUCKED THE LOTUSES. JUST THEN –
IT IS THE LAMP ON JAGANNATHA KONDA!
THE LAMP WAS TENDED BY THE LOCAL PRIEST AND KEPT BURNING.
THE LIGHT OF THE LAMP GUIDED NARASIMHA BACK TO THE ASHRAM.
EVERYTHING IS READY FOR THE PUJA, GURU GAARU.
EXCEPT THE LOTUS.
NARASIMHA WILL BRING IT.
NARASIMHA!
I WAS TESTING NARASIMHA TO SEE WHETHER HE HAS THE BELIEF AND DETERMINATION TO SUCCEED IN HIS AIM OF DRIVING THE BRITISH OUT FROM OUR COUNTRY. HE HAS PASSED THE TEST WITH FLYING COLOURS.

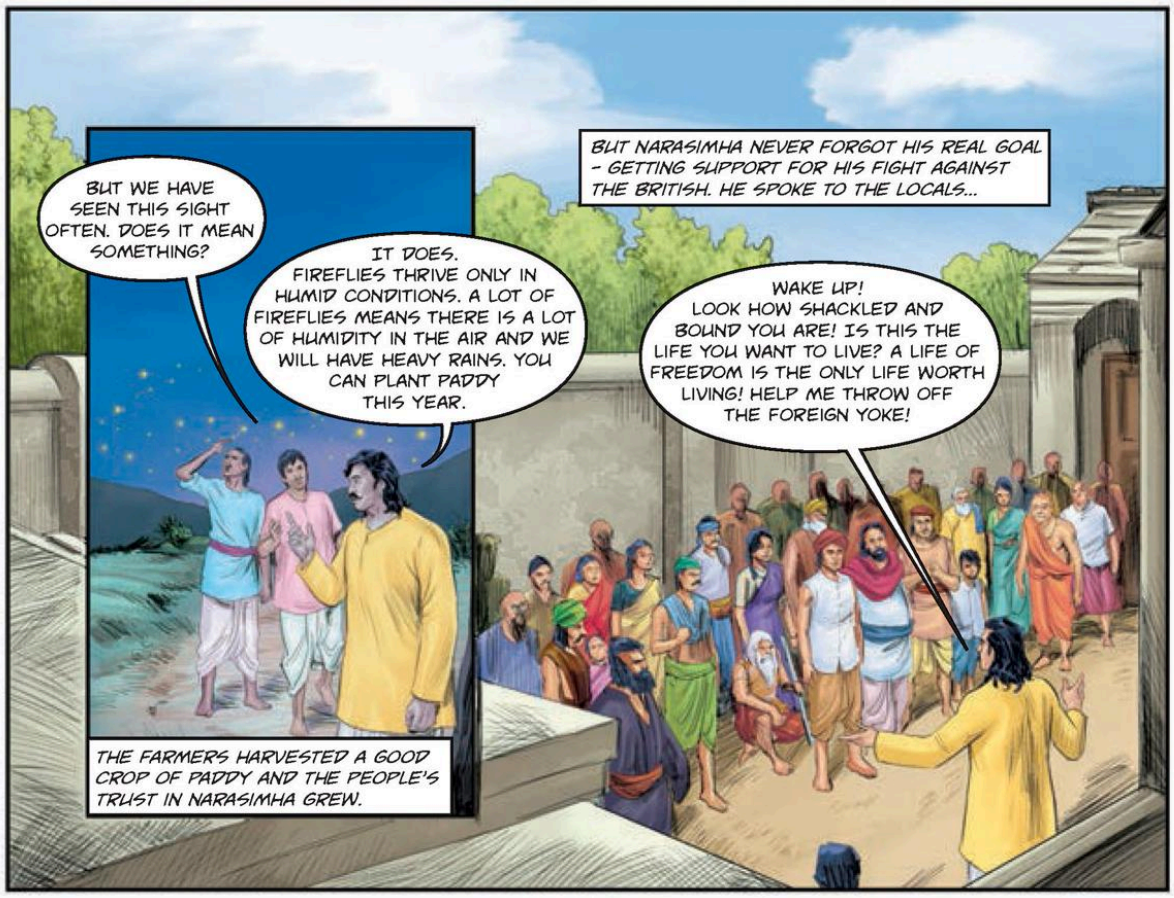

A FEW YEARS LATER WHEN NARASIMHA TURNED 21, HE WAS READY TO LEAVE THE ASHRAM. GOSAAYI VENKANNA HAD MOULDED HIM INTO A LETHAL AND DEADLY WARRIOR, A DISCIPLINED YOGI AND A COMMITTED CHAMPION FOR FREEDOM.

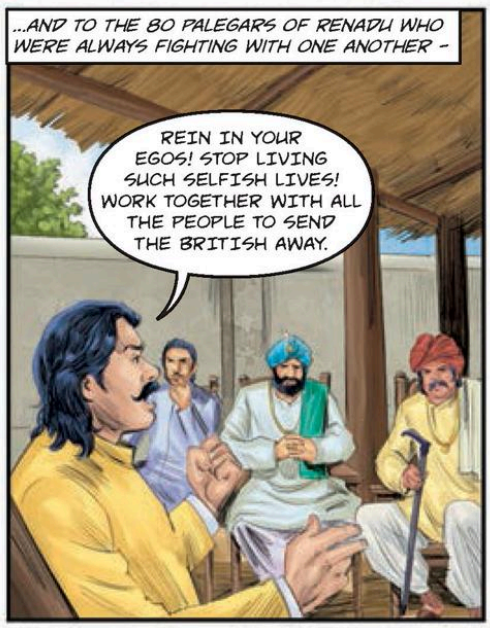
TWO YEARS AFTER NARASIMHA RETURNED TO NOSSAM, HIS GRANDFATHER DIED. A FEW YEARS LATER HE GOT MARRIED TO SIDDHAMMA. THOUGH THE YOUNG GIRL HAD NEVER SEEN HIM EARLIER, SHE HAD HEARD MANY STORIES ABOUT HIM AND HELD HIM IN GREAT ESTEEM.
ONE DAY –
WHY DO YOU LOOK SO WORRIED?
AFTER OUR LANDS IN UYYALAWADA WERE GRABBED BY THE BRITISH, THEY GAVE MY BROTHERS AND ME RS 72 AS PENSION. AS THE YOUNGEST, MY SHARE FROM THAT WAS ONLY RS 11.67P. WHICH IS NOT ENOUGH FOR US TO LIVE ON, SIDDHAMMA. I AM GOING TO ASK FOR THE PENSION MY GRANDFATHER WAS GETTING FROM NOSSAM. I AM HIS HEIR AFTER ALL.
BUT NARASIMHA WAS IN FOR A RUDE SHOCK.
THE BRITISHERS REFUSED TO RECOGNISE ME AS THAATA GAARU'S HEIR BECAUSE I AM ADOPTED!
THE DOCTRINE OF LAPSE INSTITUTED BY THE EAST INDIA COMPANY STATED THAT NO ADOPTED CHILD COULD BE A LEGAL HEIR.
RESENTMENT WAS ALSO BUILDING UP AMONGST THE PALEGARS, THE FARMERS AND THE LOCAL PEOPLE.
EARLIER THE PALEGARS WOULD USE SOME OF THE TAX MONEY FOR THE PEOPLE'S GOOD. THE BRITISH USE IT ALL FOR THEMSELVES!
COLLECTORS* CHANGE SO FREQUENTLY.
YES AND WE HAVE UNQUALIFIED PERSONS APPOINTED TO KEY POSTS.
ONE OF THE MOST UNPOPULAR MEASURES WAS THE NEW TAX LAW. WHEN THE FARMERS WENT TO PAY THEIR TAX –
THE RULES HAVE CHANGED! YOU HAVE TO PAY YOUR TAXES AT THE RATE AND IN THE WAY WE FIX.
BUT DORAA^, WE HAVE ALWAYS PAID IN CROPS.
STOP ARGUING!

*OFFICIALS IN CHARGE OF ADMINISTRATION
^RESPECTFUL WAY OF ADDRESSING A MASTER

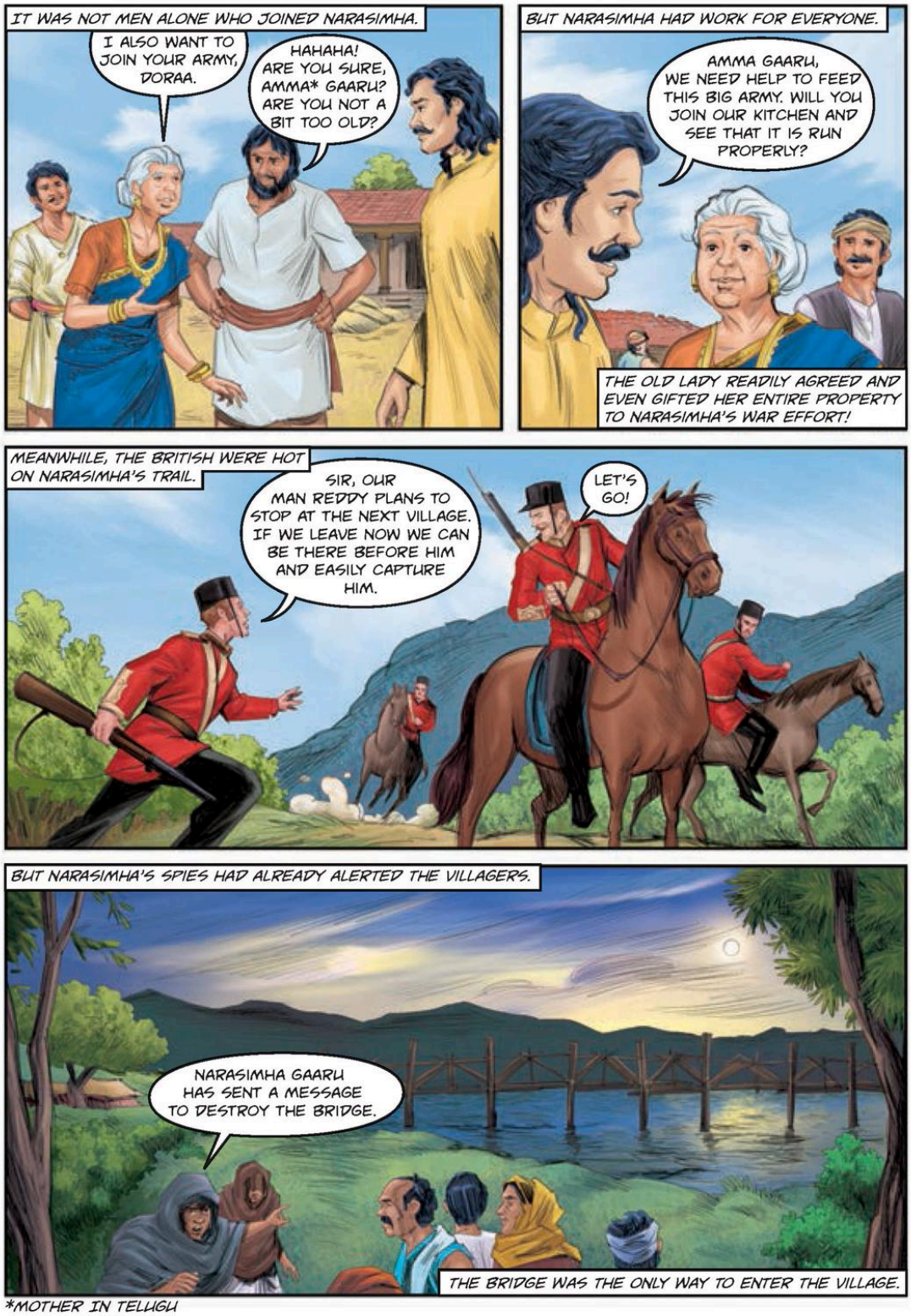

SEEING THE TENSE SITUATION, NARASIMHA WENT TO THE ASHRAM TO CONSULT WITH GOSAAYI VENKANNA.
EVERYONE FROM PALEGAR TO LABOURER IS SUFFERING UNDER THIS HARSH RULE. WE HAVE TO GET THE TELLODU* OUT FROM HERE.
YOU ARE RIGHT. BUT FIRST YOU HAVE TO WIN THE PEOPLE'S TRUST AND TAKE THEM ALONG WITH YOU.
NARASIMHA LOST NO TIME IN DOING THAT. ONE NIGHT –
DORAA, WE CANNOT DECIDE WHICH CROPS TO SOW BECAUSE WE DO NOT KNOW HOW MUCH RAIN WE WILL GET THIS YEAR.
OH, WE CAN FIND THAT OUT. COME WITH ME.
BUT HOW?
THE RAINS WERE VERY UNPREDICTABLE IN RENADU. IF THEY SOWED THE WRONG CROP, THE FARMERS WOULD NOT MAKE A PROFIT.
NARASIMHA REDDY TOOK THEM TO A FIELD WHERE AMLA^ AND NERUDU** TREES GREW.
BOTH OF YOU GO AND SHAKE THE TREES HARD!
THE MEN DID AS THEY WERE TOLD AND...
...SWARMS OF FIREFLIES FLEW OUT AND LIT UP THE NIGHT SKY.

*FOREIGNER
^ GOOSEBERRY
** JAMUN


BUT WE HAVE SEEN THIS SIGHT OFTEN. DOES IT MEAN SOMETHING?
IT DOES. FIREFLIES THRIVE ONLY IN HUMID CONDITIONS. A LOT OF FIREFLIES MEANS THERE IS A LOT OF HUMIDITY IN THE AIR AND WE WILL HAVE HEAVY RAINS. YOU CAN PLANT PADDY THIS YEAR.
THE FARMERS HARVESTED A GOOD CROP OF PADDY AND THE PEOPLE'S TRUST IN NARASIMHA GREW.
BUT NARASIMHA NEVER FORGOT HIS REAL GOAL – GETTING SUPPORT FOR HIS FIGHT AGAINST THE BRITISH. HE SPOKE TO THE LOCALS...
WAKE UP! LOOK HOW SHACKLED AND BOUND YOU ARE! IS THIS THE LIFE YOU WANT TO LIVE? A LIFE OF FREEDOM IS THE ONLY LIFE WORTH LIVING! HELP ME THROW OFF THE FOREIGN YOKE!


...AND TO THE 80 PALEGARS OF RENADU WHO WERE ALWAYS FIGHTING WITH ONE ANOTHER –
REIN IN YOUR EGOS! STOP LIVING SUCH SELFISH LIVES! WORK TOGETHER WITH ALL THE PEOPLE TO SEND THE BRITISH AWAY.

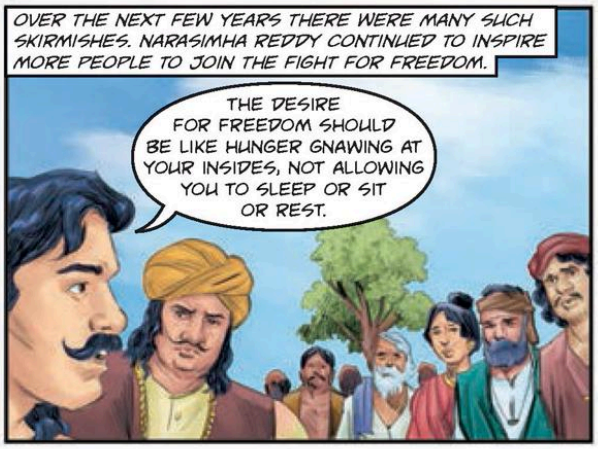
SIDDHAMMA ALSO WENT FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE TALKING TO THE WOMENFOLK.
WE WANT A SAFE AND PROSPEROUS LAND FOR OUR CHILDREN. TELL YOUR MEN TO GO AND JOIN THE FIGHT. THEY WILL SECURE A GOOD FUTURE FOR ALL OF US.

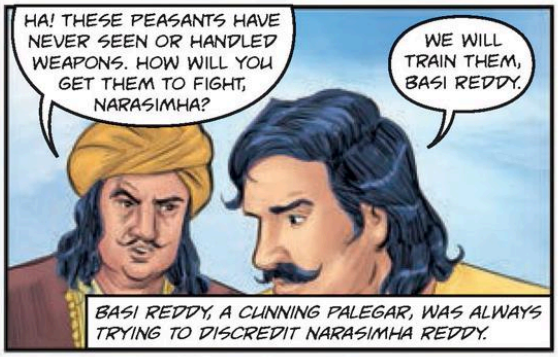

IT WAS NOT MEN ALONE WHO JOINED NARASIMHA.
I ALSO WANT TO JOIN YOUR ARMY, DORAA.
HAHAHA! ARE YOU SURE, AMMA* GAARU? ARE YOU NOT A BIT TOO OLD?
BUT NARASIMHA HAD WORK FOR EVERYONE.
AMMA GAARU, WE NEED HELP TO FEED THIS BIG ARMY. WILL YOU JOIN OUR KITCHEN AND SEE THAT IT IS RUN PROPERLY?
THE OLD LADY READILY AGREED AND EVEN GIFTED HER ENTIRE PROPERTY TO NARASIMHA'S WAR EFFORT!
MEANWHILE, THE BRITISH WERE HOT ON NARASIMHA'S TRAIL.
SIR, OUR MAN REDDY PLANS TO STOP AT THE NEXT VILLAGE. IF WE LEAVE NOW WE CAN BE THERE BEFORE HIM AND EASILY CAPTURE HIM.
LET'S GO!
BUT NARASIMHA'S SPIES HAD ALREADY ALERTED THE VILLAGERS.
NARASIMHA GAARU HAS SENT A MESSAGE TO DESTROY THE BRIDGE.
THE BRIDGE WAS THE ONLY WAY TO ENTER THE VILLAGE.

*MOTHER IN TELUGU

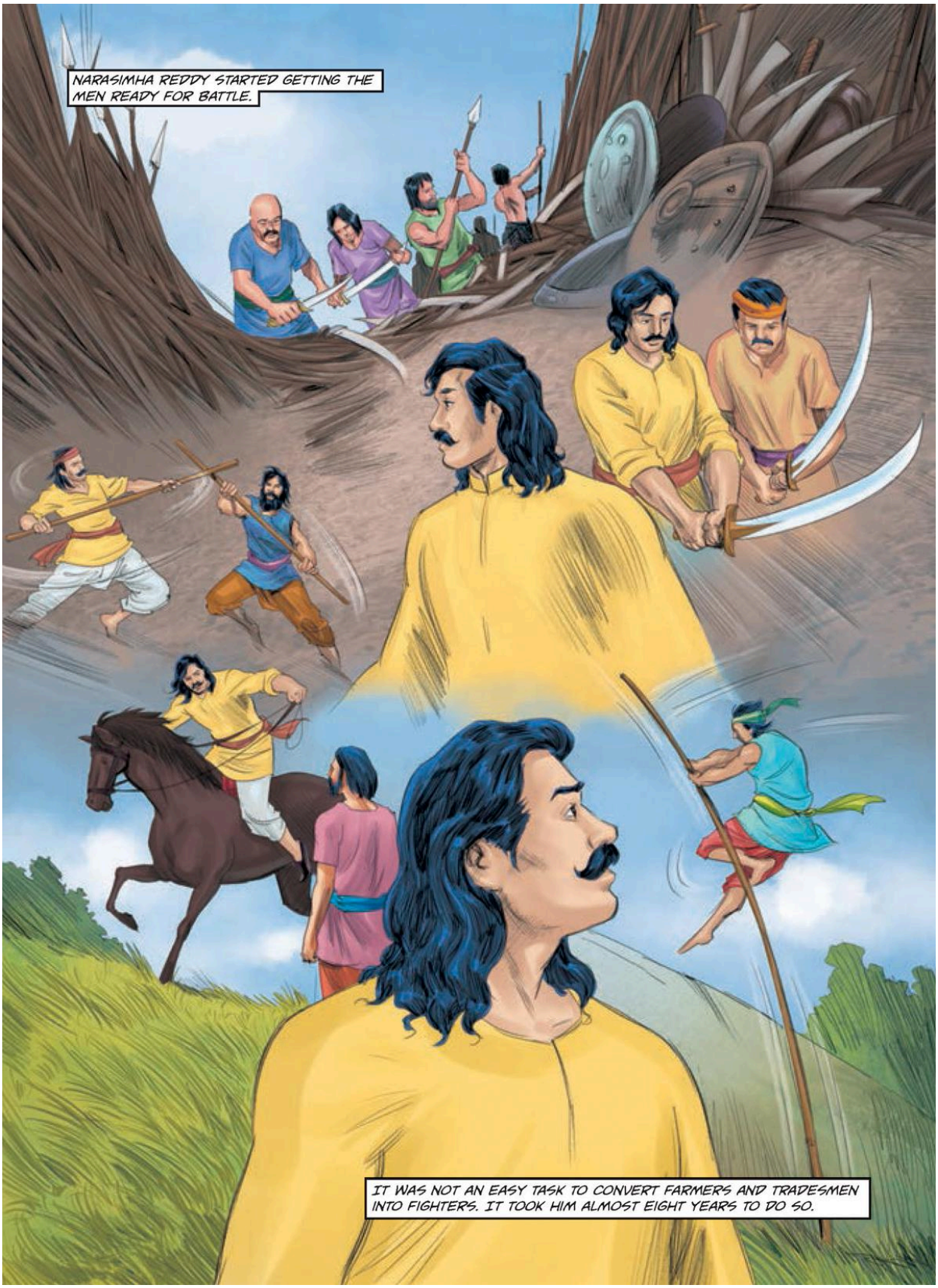
WHEN THE BRITISH SOLDIERS ARRIVED –
OH NO! THE NATIVES GOT WIND OF OUR PLANS AND HAVE DESTROYED THE BRIDGE!
NEVER SAY DIE! COME ON, LET'S SWIM ACROSS!

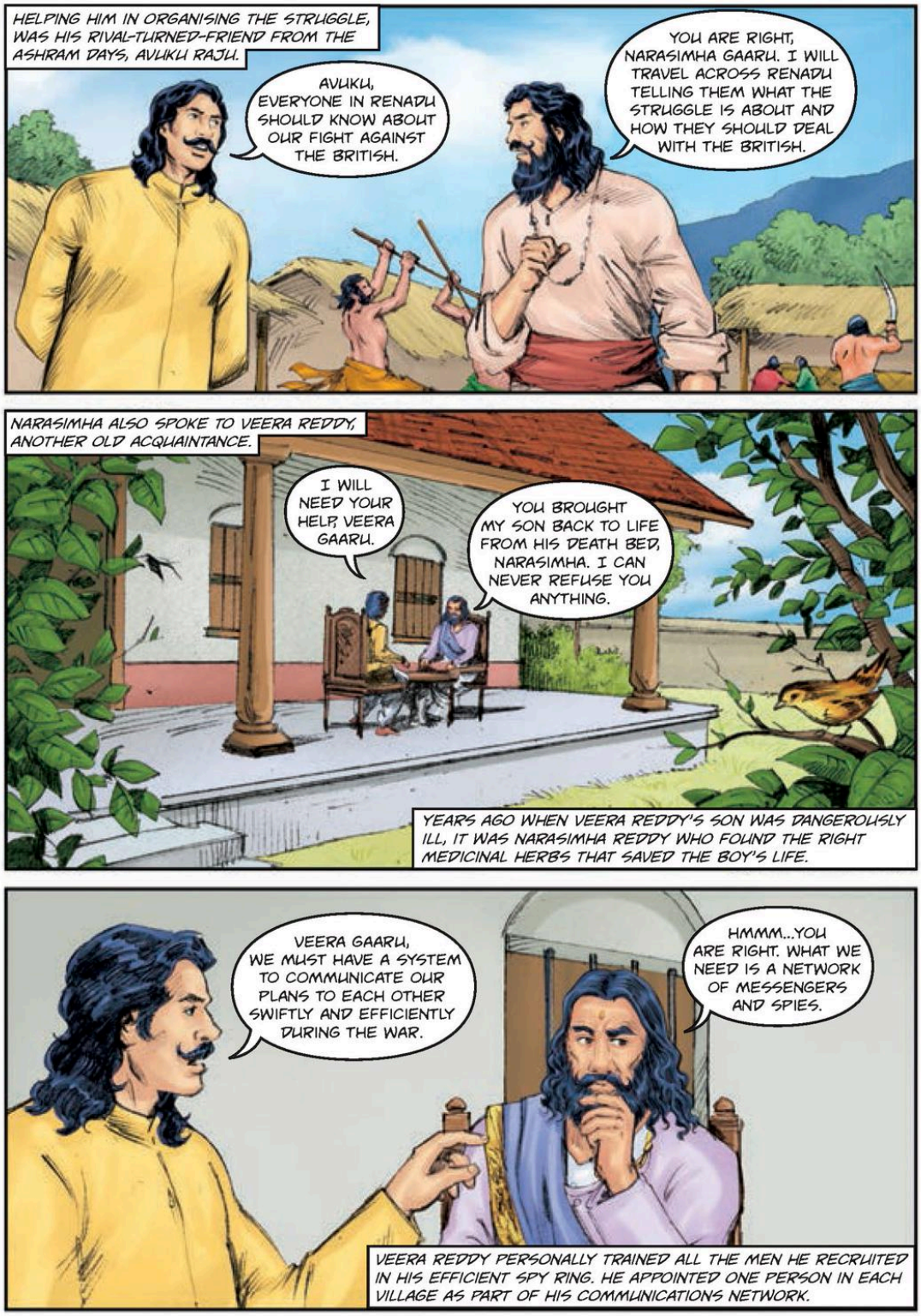
BEFORE THEY COULD DO THAT –
SYE RAA! YAAAA!

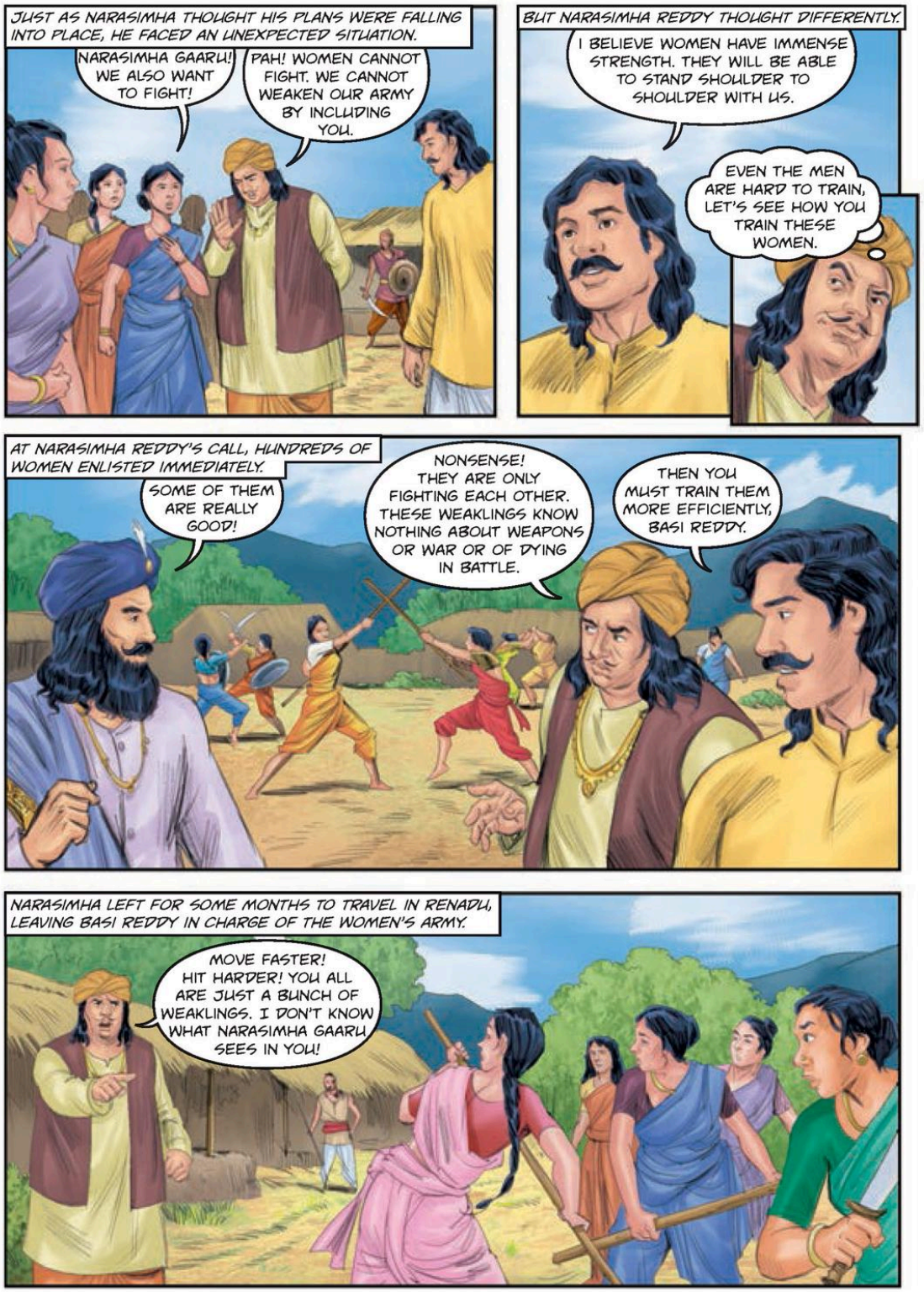

OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS THERE WERE MANY SUCH SKIRMISHES. NARASIMHA REDDY CONTINUED TO INSPIRE MORE PEOPLE TO JOIN THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM.
THE DESIRE FOR FREEDOM SHOULD BE LIKE HUNGER GNAWING AT YOUR INSIDES, NOT ALLOWING YOU TO SLEEP OR SIT OR REST.


HA! THESE PEASANTS HAVE NEVER SEEN OR HANDLED WEAPONS. HOW WILL YOU GET THEM TO FIGHT, NARASIMHA?
WE WILL TRAIN THEM, BASI REDDY.
BASI REDDY, A CUNNING PALEGAR, WAS ALWAYS TRYING TO DISCREDIT NARASIMHA REDDY.

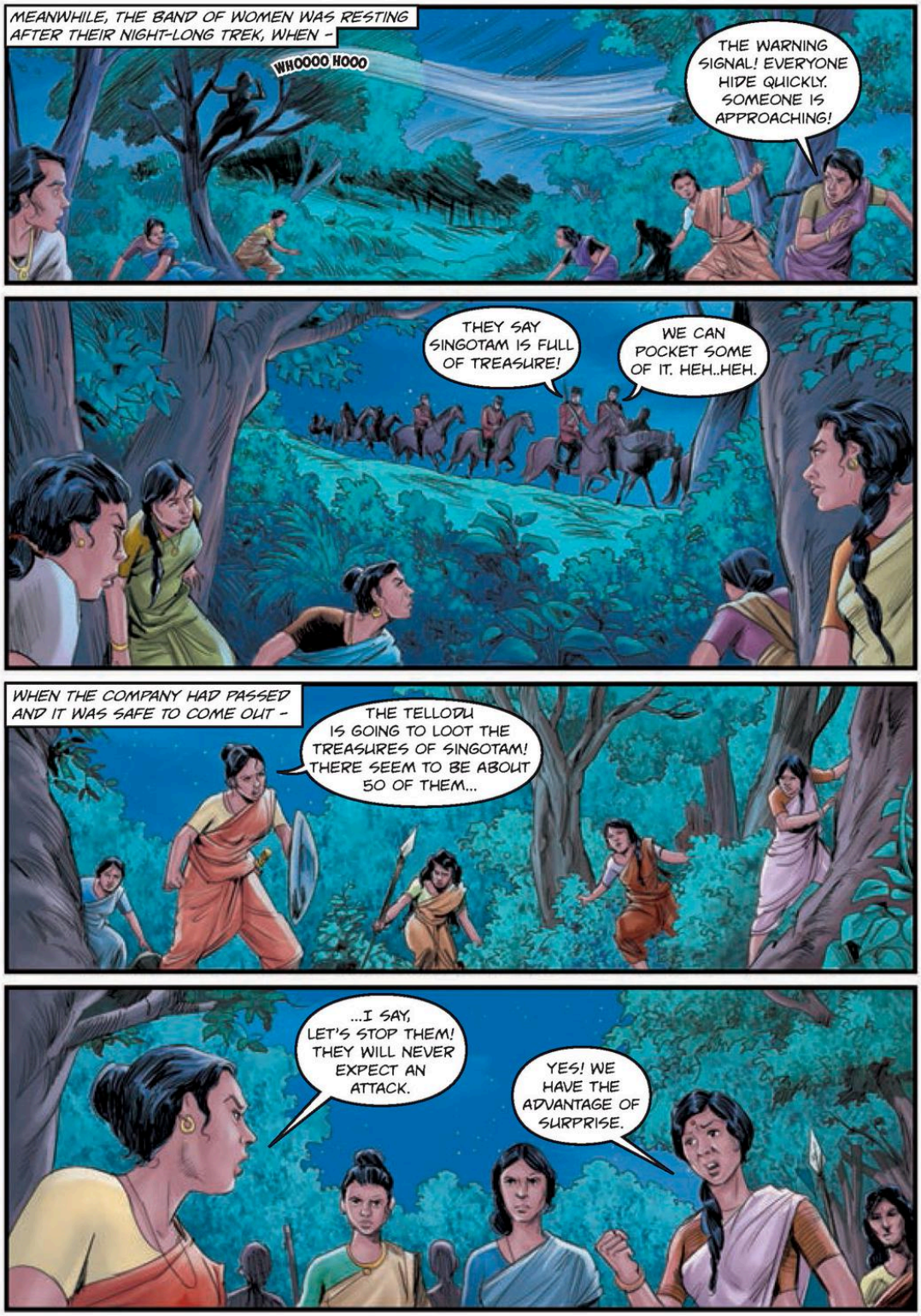
ALL OF YOU COME TO THE BIG FIELD OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE AT FOUR O'CLOCK TOMORROW MORNING. WE WILL TEACH YOU HOW TO USE WEAPONS.


NARASIMHA REDDY STARTED GETTING THE MEN READY FOR BATTLE.
IT WAS NOT AN EASY TASK TO CONVERT FARMERS AND TRADESMEN INTO FIGHTERS. IT TOOK HIM ALMOST EIGHT YEARS TO DO SO.

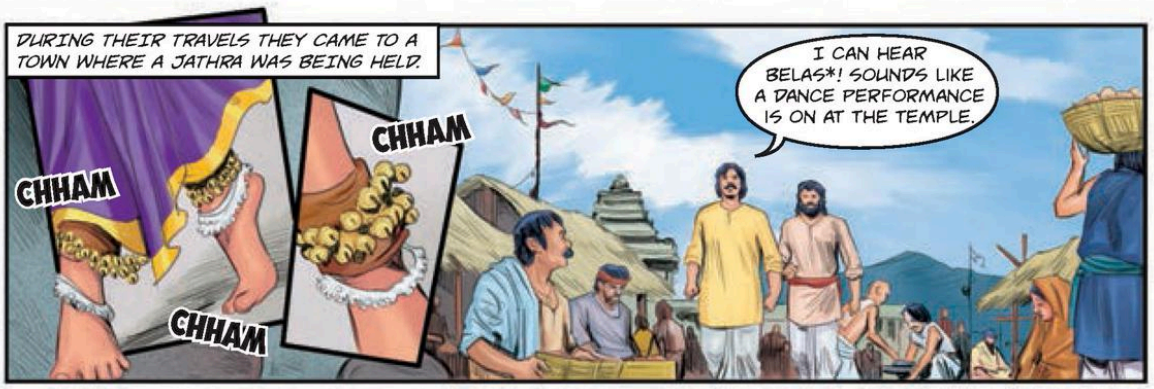

HELPING HIM IN ORGANISING THE STRUGGLE, WAS HIS RIVAL-TURNED-FRIEND FROM THE ASHRAM DAYS, AVUKU RAJU.
AVUKU, EVERYONE IN RENADU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT OUR FIGHT AGAINST THE BRITISH.
YOU ARE RIGHT, NARASIMHA GAARU. I WILL TRAVEL ACROSS RENADU TELLING THEM WHAT THE STRUGGLE IS ABOUT AND HOW THEY SHOULD DEAL WITH THE BRITISH.
NARASIMHA ALSO SPOKE TO VEERA REDDY, ANOTHER OLD ACQUAINTANCE.
I WILL NEED YOUR HELP, VEERA GAARU.
YOU BROUGHT MY SON BACK TO LIFE FROM HIS DEATH BED, NARASIMHA. I CAN NEVER REFUSE YOU ANYTHING.
YEARS AGO WHEN VEERA REDDY'S SON WAS DANGEROUSLY ILL, IT WAS NARASIMHA REDDY WHO FOUND THE RIGHT MEDICINAL HERBS THAT SAVED THE BOY'S LIFE.
VEERA GAARU, WE MUST HAVE A SYSTEM TO COMMUNICATE OUR PLANS TO EACH OTHER SWIFTLY AND EFFICIENTLY DURING THE WAR.
HMMM...YOU ARE RIGHT. WHAT WE NEED IS A NETWORK OF MESSENGERS AND SPIES.
VEERA REDDY PERSONALLY TRAINED ALL THE MEN HE RECRUITED IN HIS EFFICIENT SPY RING. HE APPOINTED ONE PERSON IN EACH VILLAGE AS PART OF HIS COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK.

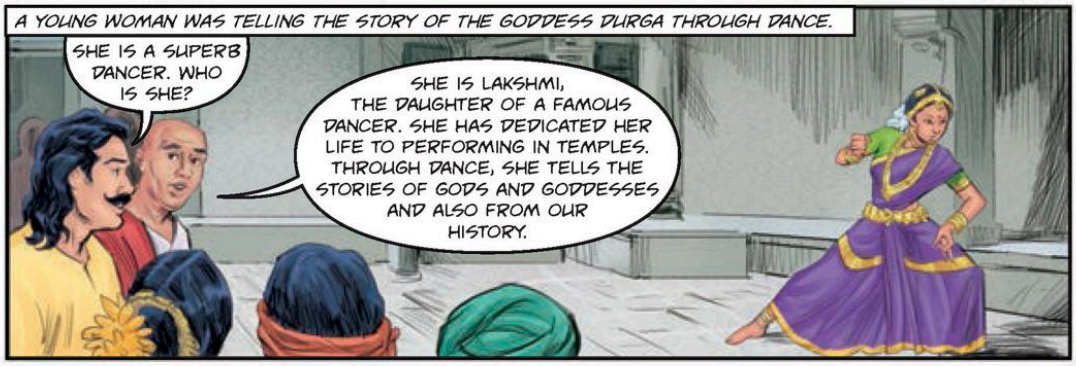

JUST AS NARASIMHA THOUGHT HIS PLANS WERE FALLING INTO PLACE, HE FACED AN UNEXPECTED SITUATION.
NARASIMHA GAARU! WE ALSO WANT TO FIGHT!
PAH! WOMEN CANNOT FIGHT. WE CANNOT WEAKEN OUR ARMY BY INCLUDING YOU.
BUT NARASIMHA REDDY THOUGHT DIFFERENTLY.
I BELIEVE WOMEN HAVE IMMENSE STRENGTH. THEY WILL BE ABLE TO STAND SHOULDER TO SHOULDER WITH US.
EVEN THE MEN ARE HARD TO TRAIN, LET'S SEE HOW YOU TRAIN THESE WOMEN.
AT NARASIMHA REDDY'S CALL, HUNDREDS OF WOMEN ENLISTED IMMEDIATELY.
SOME OF THEM ARE REALLY GOOD!
NONSENSE! THEY ARE ONLY FIGHTING EACH OTHER. THESE WEAKLINGS KNOW NOTHING ABOUT WEAPONS OR WAR OR OF DYING IN BATTLE.
THEN YOU MUST TRAIN THEM MORE EFFICIENTLY, BASI REDDY.
NARASIMHA LEFT FOR SOME MONTHS TO TRAVEL IN RENADU, LEAVING BASI REDDY IN CHARGE OF THE WOMEN'S ARMY.
MOVE FASTER! HIT HARDER! YOU ALL ARE JUST A BUNCH OF WEAKLINGS. I DON'T KNOW WHAT NARASIMHA GAARU SEES IN YOU!

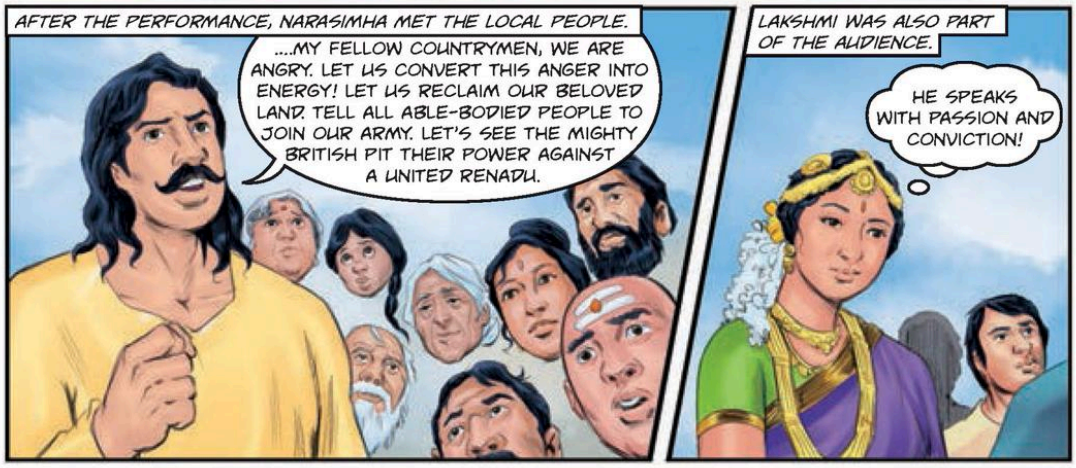
WHEN NARASIMHA REDDY RETURNED –
I TOLD YOU THIS IS A WASTE OF TIME. THESE WOMEN ARE NEVER GOING TO BE ANY GOOD ON THE BATTLEFIELD.
HAVE I MADE A WRONG DECISION IN ACCEPTING WOMEN IN MY ARMY? MAYBE BASI REDDY IS NOT TELLING ME THE TRUTH. TOMORROW I WILL ASK THEM TO SHOW ME WHAT THEY HAVE LEARNT.
DORAA THINKS WE HAVE LET HIM DOWN.
BUT HOW CAN HE THINK THAT? HE HAS NOT SEEN OUR SKILLS.
AND HE NEVER WILL AS LONG AS BASI REDDY IS IN CHARGE OF US. THERE IS NO POINT IN CONTINUING HERE. I SAY, LET US LEAVE.
THAT NIGHT WHEN EVERYONE WAS FAST ASLEEP, THE WOMEN CREPT OUT OF THE CAMP AND MELTED AWAY INTO THE DARK SHADOWS.
SHHHH... DON'T MAKE A NOISE.
EARLY NEXT MORNING –
NARASIMHA GAARU! THE BRITISH ARE HEADING TOWARDS SINGOTAM.
THAT IS WHERE MANY OF OUR ANCIENT TREASURES ARE KEPT. WE CANNOT LET OUR HERITAGE BE LOOTED BY THESE WHITE MEN.
GET THE MEN READY. WE MUST LEAVE AT ONCE.

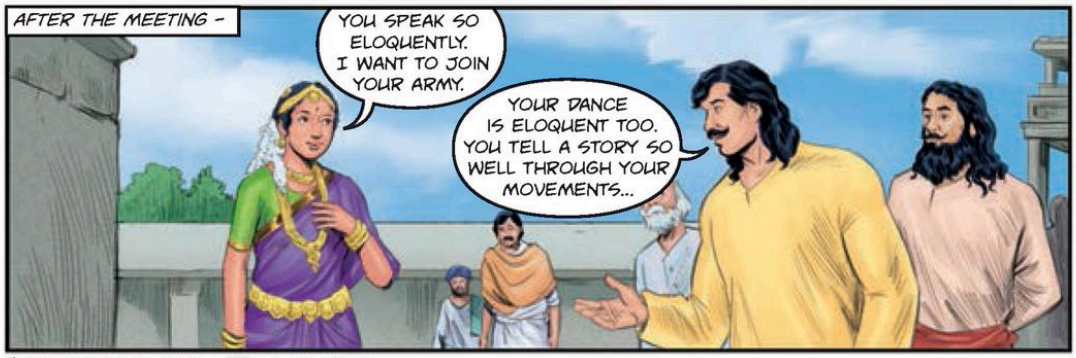

MEANWHILE, THE BAND OF WOMEN WAS RESTING AFTER THEIR NIGHT-LONG TREK, WHEN –
WHOOOO HOOO
THE WARNING SIGNAL! EVERYONE HIDE QUICKLY. SOMEONE IS APPROACHING!
THEY SAY SINGOTAM IS FULL OF TREASURE!
WE CAN POCKET SOME OF IT. HEH..HEH.
WHEN THE COMPANY HAD PASSED AND IT WAS SAFE TO COME OUT –
THE TELLODU IS GOING TO LOOT THE TREASURES OF SINGOTAM! THERE SEEM TO BE ABOUT 50 OF THEM...
...I SAY, LET'S STOP THEM! THEY WILL NEVER EXPECT AN ATTACK.
YES! WE HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF SURPRISE.

THE BRITISH CONTINGENT WAS SHOCKED OUT OF THEIR WITS.
FOR DORAA!
UH..HUH.. WHAT!?
FOR DORAA!
WHEN NARSIMHA AND HIS MEN ARRIVED –
WE SAVED THE TREASURES OF SINGOTAM, NARASIMHA GAARU. WE SAVED THE TREASURES OF SINGOTAM!
I CANNOT BELIEVE MY EYES! BASI REDDY, DO YOU SEE WHAT I SEE?
LET'S SEE IF THE WHITE MAN WILL DARE TO FIGHT AGAINST SUCH A COURAGEOUS ARMY AGAIN. SYE RAA!
SYE RAA! SYE RAA!!
SYE RAA! SYE RAA!!
NARASIMHA KNEW THAT THE STORY OF THE BATTLE OF SINGOTAM WOULD INSPIRE PEOPLE TO JOIN HIS ARMY.
AVUKU! LET US GO TO THE FARTHEST CORNERS OF RENADU AND SPREAD THE STORIES OF THE VALOUR AND COURAGE OF OUR ARMY. WE WILL GET THOUSANDS MORE TO JOIN US.


DURING THEIR TRAVELS THEY CAME TO A TOWN WHERE A JATHRA WAS BEING HELD.
CHHAM
CHHAM
CHHAM
I CAN HEAR BELAS*! SOUNDS LIKE A DANCE PERFORMANCE IS ON AT THE TEMPLE.


A YOUNG WOMAN WAS TELLING THE STORY OF THE GODDESS DURGA THROUGH DANCE.
SHE IS A SUPERB DANCER. WHO IS SHE?
SHE IS LAKSHMI, THE DAUGHTER OF A FAMOUS DANCER. SHE HAS DEDICATED HER LIFE TO PERFORMING IN TEMPLES. THROUGH DANCE, SHE TELLS THE STORIES OF GODS AND GODDESSES AND ALSO FROM OUR HISTORY.

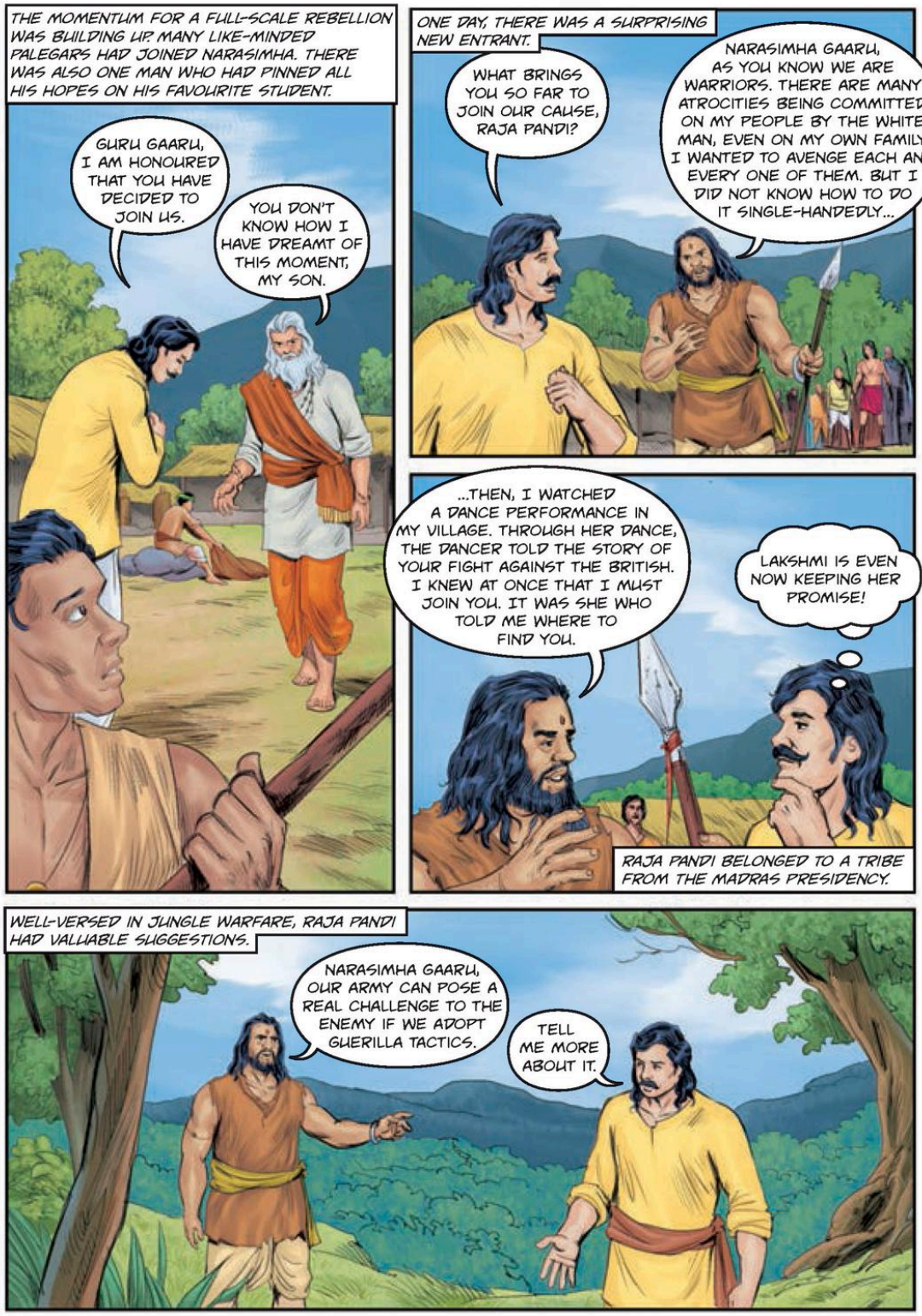

AFTER THE PERFORMANCE, NARASIMHA MET THE LOCAL PEOPLE.
....MY FELLOW COUNTRYMEN, WE ARE ANGRY. LET US CONVERT THIS ANGER INTO ENERGY! LET US RECLAIM OUR BELOVED LAND. TELL ALL ABLE-BODIED PEOPLE TO JOIN OUR ARMY. LET'S SEE THE MIGHTY BRITISH PIT THEIR POWER AGAINST A UNITED RENADU.
LAKSHMI WAS ALSO PART OF THE AUDIENCE.
HE SPEAKS WITH PASSION AND CONVICTION!

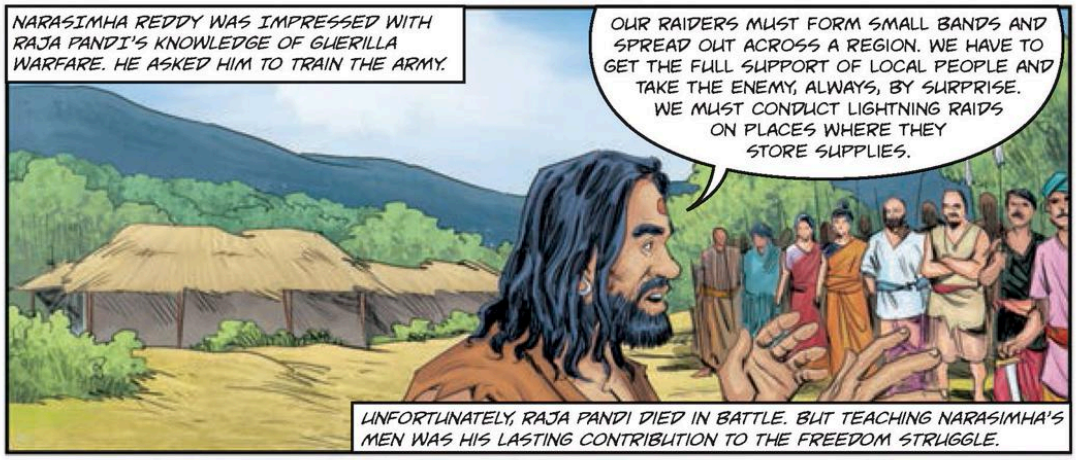

AFTER THE MEETING –
YOU SPEAK SO ELOQUENTLY. I WANT TO JOIN YOUR army.
YOUR DANCE IS ELOQUENT TOO. YOU TELL A STORY SO WELL THROUGH YOUR MOVEMENTS...

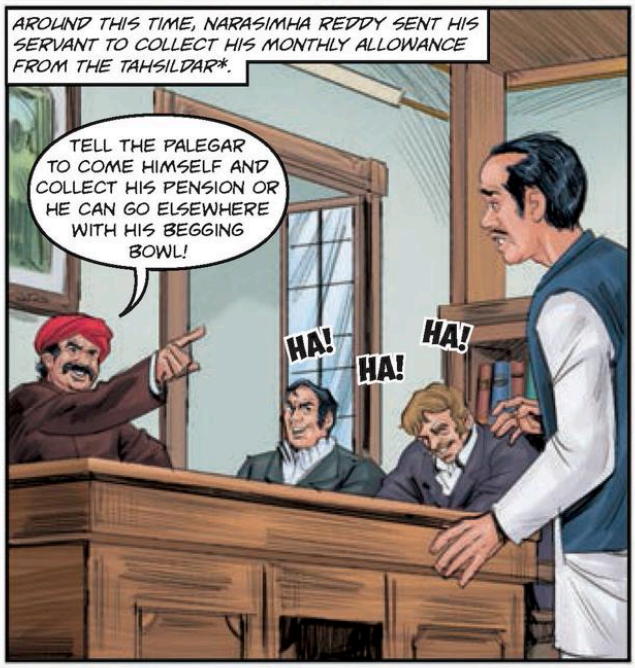
*ANKLETS WITH SMALL BELLS ON THEM.

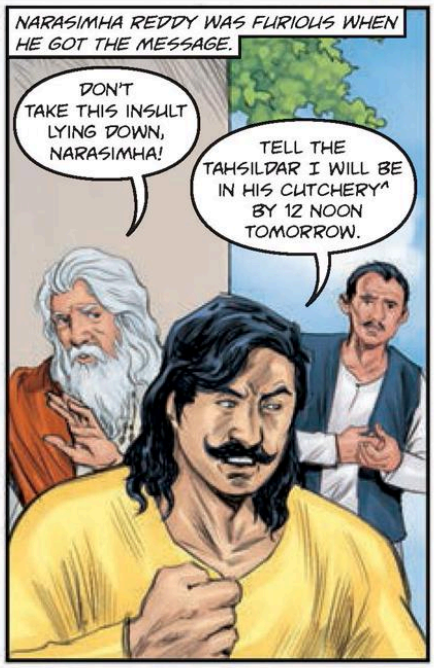
...WILL YOU TELL THE STORY OF OUR FIGHT, TO THE PEOPLE OF RENADU, THROUGH YOUR DANCE?
YES, I WILL! I ALSO DANCE REGULARLY AT TEMPLES IN MADRAS* AND AS FAR AWAY AS BIDAR. I WILL TELL THE PEOPLE THERE ALSO ABOUT YOU.
LAKSHMI WENT FROM PLACE TO PLACE DANCING THE STORY OF FREEDOM. SOON –
THAT DANCER SPELLS TROUBLE! HAVE HER PUT BEHIND BARS.
BUT LAKSHMI HAD BUILT A STRONG NETWORK OF SUPPORTERS AND SAFE HOUSES IN THE PLACES WHERE SHE DANCED...
...SO SHE ALWAYS ESCAPED BEFORE THE BRITISH COULD CAPTURE HER.
LAKSHMI'S POWERFUL STORYTELLING INSPIRED HUNDREDS TO JOIN NARASIMHA'S FIGHT.
THE YEARS FLEW PAST AND SOON IT WAS 1846.
IT HAS TAKEN NINE LONG YEARS TO MAKE SOLDIERS OF 9,000 COMMON FOLK. TO TRAIN THEM AWAY FROM THE PRYING EYES OF THE ENEMY HAS BEEN A REAL CHALLENGE BUT WITH THE COOPERATION OF EVERYONE, PALEGAR TO PEASANT, I CAN PROUDLY SAY TODAY – OUR ARMY IS BATTLE-READY!
WE HAVE ENOUGH ARMS AND AMMUNITION TOO.
NOW ALL WE NEED IS THE RIGHT MOMENT TO STRIKE AND DELIVER OUR PEOPLE FROM THE FOREIGN DEVIL.

*NOW KNOWN AS CHENNAI


THE MOMENTUM FOR A FULL-SCALE REBELLION WAS BUILDING UP. MANY LIKE-MINDED PALEGARS HAD JOINED NARASIMHA. THERE WAS ALSO ONE MAN WHO HAD PINNED ALL HIS HOPES ON HIS FAVOURITE STUDENT.
GURU GAARU, I AM HONOURED THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO JOIN US.
YOU DON'T KNOW HOW I HAVE DREAMT OF THIS MOMENT, MY SON.
ONE DAY, THERE WAS A SURPRISING NEW ENTRANT.
WHAT BRINGS YOU SO FAR TO JOIN OUR CAUSE, RAJA PANDI?
NARASIMHA GAARU, AS YOU KNOW WE ARE WARRIORS. THERE ARE MANY ATROCITIES BEING COMMITTED ON MY PEOPLE BY THE WHITE MAN, EVEN ON MY OWN FAMILY. I WANTED TO AVENGE EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THEM. BUT I DID NOT KNOW HOW TO DO IT SINGLE-HANDEDLY...
...THEN, I WATCHED A DANCE PERFORMANCE IN MY VILLAGE. THROUGH HER DANCE, THE DANCER TOLD THE STORY OF YOUR FIGHT AGAINST THE BRITISH. I KNEW AT ONCE THAT I MUST JOIN YOU. IT WAS SHE WHO TOLD ME WHERE TO FIND YOU.
LAKSHMI IS EVEN NOW KEEPING HER PROMISE!
RAJA PANDI BELONGED TO A TRIBE FROM THE MADRAS PRESIDENCY.
WELL-VERSED IN JUNGLE WARFARE, RAJA PANDI HAD VALUABLE SUGGESTIONS.
NARASIMHA GAARU, OUR ARMY CAN POSE A REAL CHALLENGE TO THE ENEMY IF WE ADOPT GUERILLA TACTICS.
TELL ME MORE ABOUT IT.


NARASIMHA REDDY WAS IMPRESSED WITH RAJA PANDI'S KNOWLEDGE OF GUERILLA WARFARE. HE ASKED HIM TO TRAIN THE ARMY.
OUR RAIDERS MUST FORM SMALL BANDS AND SPREAD OUT ACROSS A REGION. WE HAVE TO GET THE FULL SUPPORT OF LOCAL PEOPLE AND TAKE THE ENEMY, ALWAYS, BY SURPRISE. WE MUST CONDUCT LIGHTNING RAIDS ON PLACES WHERE THEY STORE SUPPLIES.
UNFORTUNATELY, RAJA PANDI DIED IN BATTLE. BUT TEACHING NARASIMHA'S MEN WAS HIS LASTING CONTRIBUTION TO THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE.


AROUND THIS TIME, NARASIMHA REDDY SENT HIS SERVANT TO COLLECT HIS MONTHLY ALLOWANCE FROM THE TAHSILDAR*.
TELL THE PALEGAR TO COME HIMSELF AND COLLECT HIS PENSION OR HE CAN GO ELSEWHERE WITH HIS BEGGING BOWL!
HA!
HA!
HA!


NARASIMHA REDDY WAS FURIOUS WHEN HE GOT THE MESSAGE.
DON'T TAKE THIS INSULT LYING DOWN, NARASIMHA!
TELL THE TAHSILDAR I WILL BE IN HIS CUTCHERY^ BY 12 NOON TOMORROW.

AT NOON THE NEXT DAY, NARASIMHA AND 500 OF HIS TRAINED FOLLOWERS ATTACKED THE CUTCHERY!
NARASIMHA REDDY!
THE TAHSILDAR AND A COMPANY GUMASTAN** WERE AMONG THOSE KILLED.

*AN OFFICIAL OF THE REVENUE DEPARTMENT
^COURT OF LAW **A CLERK

THE OFFICIALS OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY HASTILY CALLED A MEETING TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION.
WE MUST QUELL THIS INSUBORDINATION WITH AN IRON HAND!
I VOTE WE GET COCHRANE* TO TAKE CHARGE. HE IS RUTHLESS AND WON'T BROOK ANY NONSENSE.
J.H. COCHRANE AND HIS DEPUTY, JACKSON, HAD A REPUTATION FOR BEING CRUEL AND VIOLENT. BETWEEN THEM, THEY UNLEASHED A REIGN OF TERROR IN THE DISTRICT.
WILL YOU DARE REVOLT AGAIN, MISERABLE SCUM!?
ONE NIGHT, AS JACKSON WAS TRAVELLING –
DIE, TOLLEDU!
ARRGHH!
WHEN COCHRANE HEARD THE NEWS –
WHO IS THIS NARASIMHA REDDY? I WANT TO SEE HIM HANGED!
COCHRANE SENT A CONTINGENT OF SOLDIERS TO CAPTURE NARASIMHA.
I WILL MAKE THAT RASCAL PAY FOR JACKSON'S DEATH.
YES, SIR! HE MUST HANG FOR THIS.
COCHRANE MADE IT HIS LIFE'S MISSION TO PURSUE AND CAPTURE NARASIMHA REDDY.

*J.H. COCHRANE WAS THE COLLECTOR OF KADAPPA, A CITY IN RENADU.

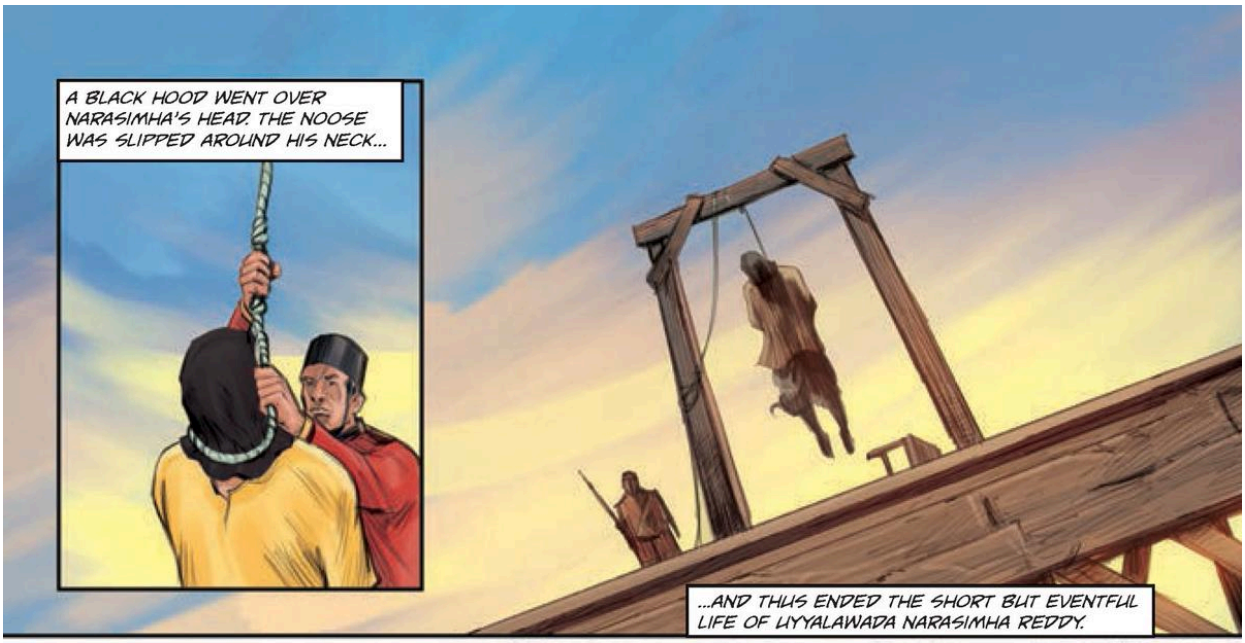
THE TAHSILDAR OF KOILKUNTLA SENT A HUNDRED SOLDIERS TO CAPTURE NARASIMHA. BUT –
MANY OF OUR MEN HAVE JOINED NARASIMHA REDDY.
HE TOOK THE REST OF THE MEN AS PRISONERS!
FLUSHED WITH SUCCESS, NARASIMHA AND HIS ARMY MARCHED TO THE KOILKUNTLA TREASURY AND LOOTED IT. THE ENGLISH OFFICIALS HAD NOT YET GOT OVER THE SHOCK OF THAT NEWS WHEN –
SIR! WE HAVE RECEIVED VERY BAD NEWS! THE BRIGANDS HAVE KILLED THE TAHSILDARS OF KOILKUNTLA AND RUDRAVARAM!
COCHRANE! YOU MUST GO IMMEDIATELY AND DEAL WITH THIS DANGEROUS NUISANCE.
SO –
SEND A CONTINGENT OF ARMED SOLDIERS, UNDER CAPTAIN NORTON, TO ARREST NARASIMHA REDDY! MORE OF THESE POSTERS MUST BE PUT UP IN EVERY TOWN AND VILLAGE.
WANTED
A REWARD OF RS 5,000/- FOR ANYONE GIVING INFORMATION ABOUT NARASIMHA REDDY.
WANTED
A REWARD OF RS 10,000/- FOR ANYONE CAPTURING NARASIMHA REDDY DEAD OR ALIVE.
CONFIDENT OF CAPTURING NARASIMHA, COCHRANE MADE FURTHER PLANS.
WE NEED TO SET UP A CRIMINAL COURT FOR THAT BRIGAND'S TRIAL...
...I AM DETERMINED TO BRING HIM HERE, BOUND HAND AND FOOT!
WHILE COCHRANE WAS MAKING PLANS, NARASIMHA AND HIS ARMY HID IN THE DENSE NALLAMALLA FORESTS AND CONDUCTED NUMEROUS RAIDS ON NEARBY TOWNS.
LOOT THE TREASURY IN KISTAMPALLY. I WILL GO TO MUNDLAPADU.
I WILL DO THAT.

WHEN THE NEWS OF THE RAIDS REACHED THE BRITISH IN GIDDALUR –
THIS IS THE LAST STRAW! NARASIMHA REDDY IS GETTING TOO BOLD. WE MUST STEP UP OUR EFFORTS TO CAPTURE HIM.
THE SUCCESS OF HIS LIGHTNING ATTACKS ON THE TWO TOWNS HAD INDEED EMBOLDENED NARASIMHA REDDY.
THE BRITISH ARE A DEMORALISED ARMY. NOW IS THE TIME TO ATTACK THEM DIRECTLY.
SYE RAA! LET'S DO IT!
BUT THE BRITISH CAME TO KNOW OF THEIR PLAN. THEY SENT 100 SOLDIERS, LED BY LT WATSON AND THE TAHSILDAR OF CUMBUM, TO CONFRONT NARASIMHA'S ARMY.
I AM TOLD THAT THE REBELS NUMBER 5000! WE NEED TO TAKE THEM BY SURPRISE OR WE ARE DONE FOR. LET US HIDE IN THIS RUINED FORT AND ATTACK AFTER DARK.
THE ATTACK WAS SUCCESSFUL AND NARASIMHA REDDY WAS DEALT HIS FIRST BLOW.
IT WAS A SURPRISE ATTACK, GOSAAYI GAARU. WE LOST MORE THAN 200 MEN! I HAD TO CALL FOR A RETREAT.
TRUE, BUT YOU SHOT AND KILLED THE COLLECTOR OF CUMBUM. LET US RETREAT AND RECOVER BEFORE PLANNING THE NEXT ATTACK.

BUT THE VERY NEXT DAY, A STRONGER FORCE UNDER CAPTAIN NOTT LAUNCHED A DEADLY ATTACK.
YAAAAAAAA
NARASIMHA REDDY'S ARMY STAGGERED WITH THE IMPACT AND –
BACK TO THE FOREST! BACK, EVERYONE! RETREAT!
THAT DAY, NARASIMHA'S ARMY LOST AN EVEN LARGER NUMBER OF MEN AND WOMEN.
COCHRANE REVELLED IN THE DEFEAT.
IT HAS BEEN A VERY LONG TIME SINCE WE HEARD ANYTHING OF THE REBEL, NARASIMHA. HA HA HA! THE LION HAS BECOME A FOX AND IS LICKING HIS WOUNDS. WE CAN NOW SEND BACK OUR EXTRA CONTINGENTS OF SOLDIERS.
BUT FAR AWAY IN THE FOREST, THE LION WAS PREPARING TO ROAR AGAIN.
I KNOW WE ARE TIRED. WE HAVE LOST MANY FRIENDS. BUT THEY HAVE NOT DIED IN VAIN. WE WILL AVENGE EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THEM. WE WILL GO BACK!
YES, WE WILL GO BACK! SYE RAA!
SIX WEEKS LATER –
NARASIMHA REDDY HAS BEEN SIGHTED IN THE PERUSOMULA HILLS. I AM TOLD HE IS SCOUTING AROUND FOR MORE MEN. WE HAVE TO STOP HIM. SEND FOUR COMPANIES OF SOLDIERS AND SURROUND THE HILLS. WE MUST GET HIM THIS TIME!

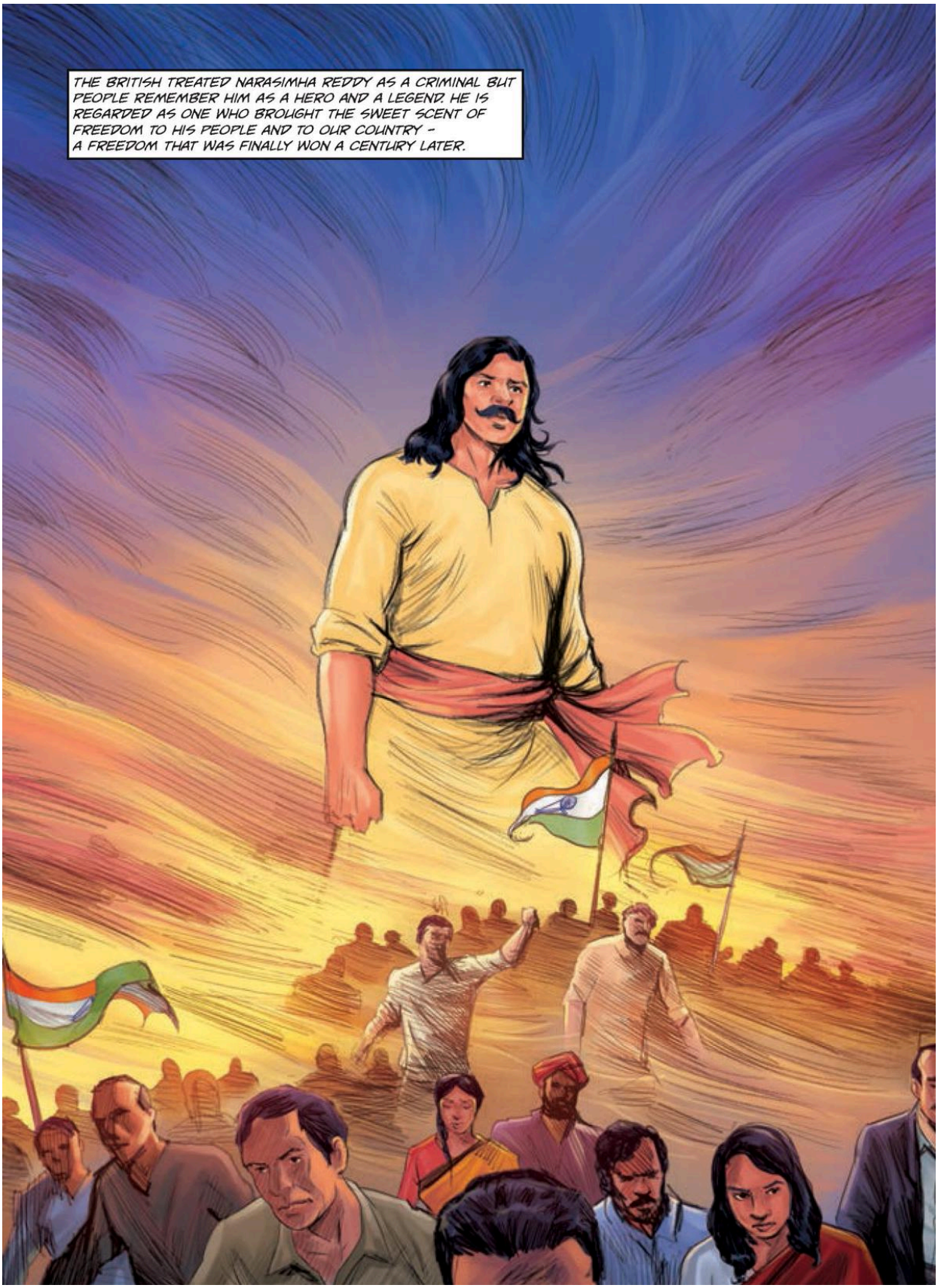
IN THE BATTLE THAT FOLLOWED, NARASIMHA REDDY AND HIS MEN WERE OUTNUMBERED BY A RESTED AND BETTER-ARMED BRITISH FORCE.
50 REBELS KILLED, 90 CAPTURED, BUT NARASIMHA REDDY GOT AWAY!
HE COULD NOT HAVE GONE VERY FAR, SIR! WE WILL ACTIVATE OUR NETWORK OF INFORMERS AND CATCH HIM SOON.
IT DID NOT TAKE LONG FOR THE WELL-TRAINED SPIES TO LOCATE A WEAK LINK IN NARASIMHA'S ARMOUR. LURED BY THE PROMISE OF MONEY, ONE OF HIS MAIDS TURNED INTO AN INFORMER.
HE IS HIDING IN JAGANNADHAPURAM.
GOOD! THIS IS FOR YOU.
UNAWARE OF THE TRAGEDY THAT WAS TO BEFALL HIM, NARASIMHA WAS WITH A SMALL BAND OF FOLLOWERS WHEN –
NARASIMHA REDDY, YOU ARE UNDER ARREST.
NO, I WILL NOT LET YOU TAKE ME!
BUT THE STRUGGLE WAS BRIEF AND SOON THE BRAVE LION OF RENADU WAS OVERPOWERED...
...AND LED AWAY IN CHAINS LIKE A COMMON CRIMINAL.

THE TRIAL OF NARASIMHA REDDY BEGAN IMMEDIATELY IN THE FAUJDARI ADALAT AT KOILKUNTLA AND LASTED FROM OCTOBER, 1846 TO JANUARY, 1847. ON JANUARY 9, 1847, W.A. INGLISS, THE PRESIDING OFFICER, PRONOUNCED THE JUDGEMENT.
THE PRISONER, NARASIMHA REDDY, IS SENTENCED TO DEATH BY HANGING. THE EXECUTION WILL TAKE PLACE ON 22 FEBRUARY, 1847.
ON THE APPOINTED DAY, THE CROWDS GATHERED IN THOUSANDS TO SEE THEIR BELOVED LEADER ON HIS LAST JOURNEY.
NARASIMHA!
NARASIMHA REDDY!
BACK! BACK, I SAY. BACK!
DORAA!
NARASIMHA CLIMBED THE PLATFORM, HIS EYES STEADY ON THE ROPE BEFORE HIM.
DO YOU HAVE ANY LAST WISH BEFORE YOU DIE?
HAH!


A BLACK HOOD WENT OVER NARASIMHA'S HEAD. THE NOOSE WAS SLIPPED AROUND HIS NECK...
...AND THUS ENDED THE SHORT BUT EVENTFUL LIFE OF UYYALAWADA NARASIMHA REDDY.

NARASIMHA REDDY'S BODY WAS KEPT HANGING FOR 30 YEARS. THE BRITISH LEFT THE SKELETON ON THE GIBBET TO SERVE AS A GRIM REMINDER TO ANYONE WHO THOUGHT THEY COULD REVOLT AGAINST THE MIGHTY BRITISH.

NARASIMHA REDDY WAS ONE OF THE FOREMOST AMONG THE NUMEROUS FREEDOM FIGHTERS IN SOUTHERN INDIA, WHO WERE SHOT DEAD, HANGED OR BLASTED TO PIECES BY CANNONS IN THE EARLY STAGES OF THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE.


THE BRITISH TREATED NARASIMHA REDDY AS A CRIMINAL BUT PEOPLE REMEMBER HIM AS A HERO AND A LEGEND. HE IS REGARDED AS ONE WHO BROUGHT THE SWEET SCENT OF FREEDOM TO HIS PEOPLE AND TO OUR COUNTRY – A FREEDOM THAT WAS FINALLY WON A CENTURY LATER.

THE PALEGARS

Illustration: Ketan Pal

In the 15th and 16th centuries, as the Vijayanagar kings extended their empire southwards, they left the southernmost parts of the territories they conquered in charge of local chieftains. These chieftains were known as Palegars.

The Palegars were in charge of maintaining law and order and running the local judiciary in their respective territories. They also maintained a battalion of troops to serve the king. They looked after the cleanliness of their villages and arranged for the digging of wells, tanks and canals.

The Palegar looked after villages under their care and collected taxes.

The main job of the Palegars was to collect taxes. 1/4th of the revenue collected was deposited in the treasury. The remaining money was used for maintaining the troops and for public works. They were also allowed to keep a portion of it for themselves.

Because the Palegars exercised a lot of power, they liked to look at themselves as royalty. They dressed in gorgeous costumes and owned flags, decorative umbrellas and palanquins.

The 80 Palegars of Renadu (Rayalaseema) were an independent lot. They defended their land by building forts of mud and stone, often on hilltops.

There are few Palegar families today. Though they cannot maintain the lifestyles they once had, they are still given respect as the descendants of a once-powerful people.

BRAVEHEARTS

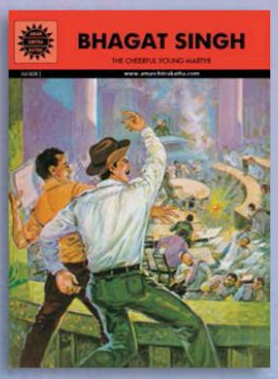
NARASIMHA REDDY

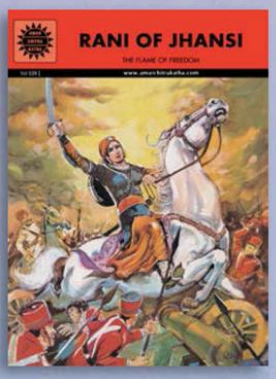
The story of Uyyalawada Narasimha Reddy is set in the turbulent years of the 19th century when the East India Company was slowly increasing its stranglehold over India. It is the story of one man's indomitable spirit against a system which was cold and ruthless.

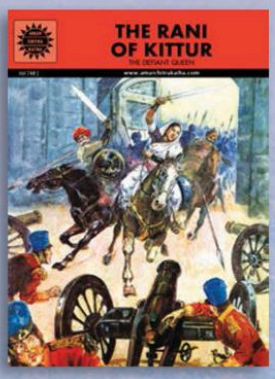
Born with a questioning mind, young Narasimha could not fathom how a foreign nation could suddenly be telling his people how to live. His questions led him to the wise sage, Gossayi Venkanna, who saw in the boy his own fire and fervour. He trained Narasimha into a lethal war machine and sent him out to rally the people of Renadu (known now as Rayalaseema) to fight against the oppressors.

Narasimha Reddy single-handedly recruited an army of people from every section of society and transformed them into a skilled fighting unit. This was one of the first confrontations against the British in South India. Though his efforts were scuttled by betrayal by his own people, Narasimha Reddy's fight against the British was one of the most sustained of his time.

ALSO AVAILABLE







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